SENECA'S 'PHOENISSAE' : INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

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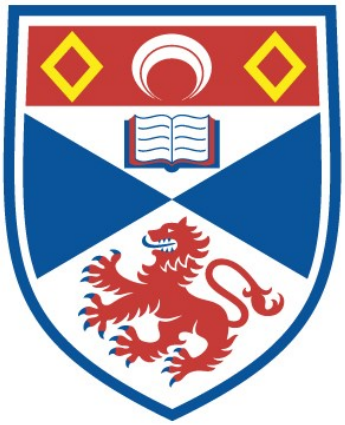

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SENECA'S **PHOENISSAE** : INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

by

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ABSTRACT

The **Introduction** deals primarily with issues regarding Seneca's Phoenissae specifically, but includes some discussion of more general questions. It consists of the following sections: 1. Title (in which the problem of the two titles, Phoenissae and Thebais, is considered); 2. The Nature and Structure of the Work (which includes discussion of: the unity and state of completion of the Phoenissae, the question of the absence of a chorus, the possibility that the prologue is missing, the ending of the play, Seneca's dramatic purpose); 3. Seneca's Treatment of the Theban Legend (in which Seneca's debt to both his dramatic and non-dramatic precursors is discussed); 4. Philosophy, Rhetoric and Politics in the Phoenissae; 5. Staging (in which there is a general consideration of the question, followed by a discussion of the particular difficulties involved in the Phoenissae); 6. Chronology (which deals with the problem of dating Seneca's plays and the criteria for establishing a relative chronology).

The **Commentary** is a line-by-line literary analysis of the Phoenissae, which includes discussion of syntactical, metrical, textual and philological questions. It is based on the 1986 OCT text of Otto Zwierlein.

DECLARATIONS

(i) I, **Marica Frank**, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately **90,000** words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

30 September 1989 .(Candidate)

(ii) I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in **October 1982** and as a candidate for the degree of **Ph.D** in **October 1982**; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews beteween **1982** and **1989.**

30 September 1989 .(Candidate)

(iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of **Ph.D.** in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

30 September 1989 .(Supervisor)

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PREFACE

1. TEXT

The text upon which this commentary is based is that of Otto Zwierlein (OCT, 1986) (for other editions consulted, see Bibliography). Zwierlein's text is a considerable improvement upon that of his immediate predecessor, Giardina (Bologna, 1966), the deficiencies of which are summarised by Tarrant (Sen. Agam., 94)

In contrast to the over-inflated apparatus of Giardina, that of Zwierlein is admirably economical and concise. Indeed, at least with regard to Phoen., perhaps too much so, in that he makes no mention of the following important readings and conjectures (on which see commentary ad loc. for discussion):

2: Gronovius' lateris for patris of the MSS (Bothe's fratris is also interesting).

19: Leo's inlisum for inuisum of the MSS.

45: Gronovius' animi (influenced perhaps by the apparent genitive in E's animae, also not mentioned by Zwierlein).

126: Heinsius' quod ... lauat for quo ... latet.

140: the postulated lacuna in the text after 139.

178: Schmidt's Oedipus as an alternative to the endings in -u and -um preserved in the MSS.

439: A's telum (E reads tectum).

456: the plausible conjectures of Avantius (donate matrem pace) and M. Müller (domate Martem pace).

Although, in general, I concur with Zwierlein's readings, emendations and punctuation, I differ from him in the following instances (on which, see further commentary ad loc.):

100 : I retain the verse, where Zwierlein deletes.

116 : ubi torua rapidus **uoluat** Ismenos uada,

117 : duc ubi ferae **sint**, ubi fretum, ubi praeceps locus,

444 : **una** iuuentus quaeque ab Inachio uenit

455 : donare **matrem pace**; si placuit scelus,

551 : hoc populus omnis, **uestraque** hoc uidit soror

556 : patriam ac penates neue, **quas** regere expetis,

571f.: haec saxa franges uictor? hinc spolia auferes?

648 : Cadmique proles. sceptra **Thebano** fuit.

2. ABBREVIATIONS

Works referred to by short titles in the thesis can be found listed in full in the Bibliography.

For ancient authors and their works, I have adopted the abbreviations used by Lewis and Short. In the case of journals, I follow, with one exception (viz. Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, which I, following common usage, shorten to HSCPh) the system of L'Année Philologique.

INTRODUCTION

1. TITLE

The title by which the play is generally known, *Phoenissae*, is the one found in the E MSS; in the A MSS the play is entitled *Thebais*.

Leo opined that the first editor of the *corpus* assigned the title *Phoenissae* to the collection of scenes, and that an interpolator emended this to *Thebais*, influenced by Statius' epic of that name[1]. There are difficulties associated with both titles. There is no evidence to suggest that Seneca, emulating Euripides, intended his play to have a chorus composed of captive Phoenician women; indeed, it is difficult to see how they could have been incorporated into the first section (1-362) when Oedipus and Antigone are wandering through the wild countryside near Cithaeron[2]. *Thebais* is even less promising: it is a title associated not with tragedy but with epic[3] and, moreover, it is largely inappropriate to the first part of the play, since traditionally it is applied to the story of the Seven against Thebes, with which the first section is not primarily concerned.

There seem to be two possible answers to the problem of the title: either, as Leo suggested, Seneca did not give the work a title since it was never completed[4] and the two unsatisfactory titles are later accretions, or, less

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[1] Leo did not regard *Phoen.* as being either part of one play or of two, but as two separate declamatory pieces, which were put together after Seneca's death (*Obs. Crit.*, 75ff.).

[2] Leo (*ibid.*, 78) asked: *et qualem ibi* [i.e. *incerta inter Thebas Cithaeronemque regione*] *chorum sibi sumat? certe quem praeter satyros bacchasue Euripidias inuenire potuerit nullum scio.* On the problem of the identity of the putative chorus, see Intro.,17ff.

[3] As well as Stat. *Theb.*, two fragments of an early Greek *Thebais* are preserved in Athenaeus 11.465e and the scholion on S. *OC.* 1375; Pausanias praises it as the best epic poem apart from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and it was often ascribed to Homer in antiquity (9.9.5).

[4] On this, see Intro., 18.

plausibly, Seneca tentatively called the play Phoenissae after Euripides' play of that name before he had given much consideration to the problem of the chorus.

2. THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

Phoen. bristles with structural problems: firstly, it appears to be incomplete, because of the absence of choral lyrics[1] and, possibly, of a prologue[2], and because of the abrupt ending and the resultant unresolved dramatic situation: Oedipus is left lurking in a cave (359f.), Polyneices, exiled by Eteocles (652f.), is still at the head of a large army outside the walls of Thebes, and the future of Jocasta, who has come out in opposition to the tyrannical ambitions of Eteocles, is still uncertain. Furthermore, the other undisputedly genuine Senecan dramas[3] all consist of five more or less connected acts[4] in iambic trimeters, divided by four choral odes[5], while the main division in Phoen. is into two distinct and, at least superficially, unintegrated sections: 1-362 in which Oedipus is the main character, and 363-664 in which Jocasta is prominent. Further sub-division into four

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[1] See Intro., 17ff.

[2] See Intro., 24ff.

[3] Herc. Fur., Troad., Med., Phaedr., Oedip., Agam., Thyest.

[4] Some less rather than more; see Tarrant, HSCPh 82 (1978), 219f. Seneca's fidelity to a five-act structure, a principle unattested in Greek tragedy of the fifth century BC, seems, on the surface, to indicate his obedience to the precept of Horace, who recommended that a tragedy consists of five acts, no more and no less (AP. 189f. Neue minor neu sit quinto productior actu/fabula quae posci uolt et spectata reponi). Tarrant, however, observes that this is unlikely, since Seneca in other respects pays scant attention to Horace's advice about tragedy (HSCPh 82 (1978), 221 n.41) and concludes that Seneca inherited a form which became canonical for all drama after Aristotle, although direct evidence for the five-act structure is available only in comedy (Menander) (ibid., 220f.). The five-act arrangement in Senecan drama means that his tragedies in general consist of five episodes, separated by four choral odes.

[5] On the structure of Oedip., which appears on the surface to contain six acts, see Tarrant, ibid.

separate acts can be discerned: 1-319[1], 320-362, 363-442, 443-664[2]. These acts are of uneven length (the second is exceptionally short, being only 43 lines long; the shortest act in the authentic plays that have choral odes is the prologue to Med. which is fifty-five lines long) and involve two changes

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[1] In the other plays of Seneca the choral odes make the division into acts clear; in Phoen., since there are no choral lyrics, other criteria for establishing the bounds of an act have to be applied. A Senecan act is an episode, a phase of the dramatic action, which takes place continuously in a particular place. If the setting changes, one can assume that a different act has begun, thus 363 and 443 each herald the start of a new episode. There does not appear to be a change of location after 319 (see n. 1 over), nor is there an exit line which would signify the end of the act (as in Sen. Troad. 812f.; Phaedr. 83f., 718; Med. 299f., 577f., 847f.; Oedip. 401f., 707f., 880; Agam. 308f., 802ff.). However, there are other reasons for believing that a new act begins at 320: the main issue of 1-319 is Oedipus' suicide and his agreeing to live in 319 completes Seneca's treatment of this theme, and 320 heralds the dominance of the second major theme of the play - the fraternal struggle; the disappearance of Antigone from the scene at 319 and the arrival of the Nuntius (see on 320ff. for the allocation of 320-27 and 347-49) suggests the beginning of a new episode, as does the concluding character of Oedipus' words in 314ff. which create a dramatic climax.

[2] Tarrant, HSCPh 82 (1978), 229, who argues that Phoen. is not incomplete, divides the work into five scenes: 1-319, 320-362, 363-402, 403-442,443-664. However, there seems to be no reason for seeing a scene-change at 402 other than the desire to make the structure of the work conform to that of the other tragedies in the Senecan corpus. Mesk, WS 37 (1915), 290 while admitting the possibility of a fourth act beginning at 443, divides the work into three acts only: 1-319, 320-36, 363-664.
Recently Hirschberg. (Sen. Phoen., 2) declared that the 'Fluchszene' (320-62) is too short to constitute a separate act and that it, like 363-442 (ibid., 3), is a scene within an act: thus he distinguishes only two acts (1-362 and 363-664), each containing two scenes (1-319, 320-362 and 363-442, 443-664) (ibid, 4).

of scene from the rough terrain outside Thebes[1] to the walls of Thebes in 362 and from the walls of Thebes to the battlefield in 443.

Unity

The structural peculiarities and the state of incompletion of Phoen. have for centuries prompted questions about the nature of the work. Heinsius, in the seventeenth century, was the first to doubt both the unity of Phoen. and its dramatic nature[2] and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the issue of whether the two fragments of Phoen. belong to one play or two was hotly debated. The proponents of the view that the fragments are remnants of, or sketches for, two separate plays[3] discerned the kernel of one drama influenced

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[1] Zwierlein (OCT) identifies the setting of 1-362 as prope Thebas in uia. In this, he follows Leo, who, however, argues for a change of setting at 320, believing, on the basis of 12, 27 and 32f., that the cauum, rupes and siluae mentioned in 358ff. are those of Cithaeron, which Oedipus has at last reached. Moricca (RFIC 45 (1917), 509f.) suggests that Cithaeron being a mountain of considerable size, Oedipus could already be on one part of it when speaking 12f. and 27, and adds that the apostrophe to Cithaeron in 31f. would lack significance if one did not imagine Oedipus actually to be on Cithaeron. Birt (Rh. Mus. 34 (1879), 519), on the other hand, believed on the basis of 63f. and 67f. that Oedipus and Antigone are in a pathless wilderness and have to decide where to go. There is, in fact, very little evidence on which to make a decision about the location of the first section of the play: Antigone and Oedipus could be on Cithaeron, although there is no compelling reason to believe that this is the case; they could be in uia, if by uia one means simply a footpath or rough track (it is difficult in terms of the atmosphere of the scene to imagine them being on the busy main road to Athens, although the problem of the chorus would be made easier with such a setting), they could simply be in wild countryside outside Thebes. All that can be said for certain is that the surrounding terrain is rough and dangerous (67ff.) and that Cithaeron is reasonably nearby (5f., 12f., 27ff.). There is no justification for postulating a change of location at 320 - the cave, the cliff and the woods mentioned by Oedipus in 358ff. correspond well to the type of landscape described by Antigone in 67ff.

[2] Quare cum tragoediam unam non posset ... duas nobis declamationes dedit in Scriverius, L. Annaeus Seneca Tragicus, 302; Leo, Obs. Crit., 77-82 likewise held that the fragments of Phoen. were composed as declamatory material.

[3] The most notable being: Schmidt, De emendandorum Senecae tragoediarum rationibus prosodaicis et metricis, 76; Richter, De Seneca tragoediarum auctore, 21f.; Peiper, Obseruatorum in Senecae Tragoediis Libellus, 38; Habrucker, Quaestiones Anneanae, 22ff.

by Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus, concerning the vicissitudes of the exiled Oedipus (1-362), and of another, based on Euripides' Phoenissae, about the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices (363-664). The unitarians, on the other hand, argued variously, and with varying degrees of plausibility, that Phoen. is part of a single play, because it is entirely modelled on a single play, namely Euripides' Phoenissae[1], because the title, which applies to both parts together, fits into the pattern of the titles in Seneca's dramatic corpus[2], because the two sections are linked by the theme of the approaching conflict and by the curse, the second section being a fulfillment of the first[3], because there exists a parallelism of design between the two sections which cannot be incidental: the main character in the first part is Oedipus, in the second, Jocasta; both are asked to mediate by two people; the request is rejectd by Oedipus since he is convinced of the uselessness of intervention because of his sons' lack of filial piety (295ff.), it is complied with by Jocasta since she believes that her intervention may succeed because of her sons' filial piety (411ff.); Jocasta wishes to prevent the nefas of the fraternal conflict, Oedipus longs for it. (328ff., 356)[4]. Mesk observes, further, that there are echoes of thought and word which cannot be explained simply by the fact that the material for both parts is taken from the same legend and that Seneca tends to be repetitive; the most compelling of those which he cites are the myth of Agaue, referred to by both Oedipus and

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[1]So Braun, Rh. Mus. 20 (1865), 271-87; Cima, RFIC 32 (1904), 255ff.

[2]Birt, NJbb. 27 (1911), 361 sees the order of the dramas in E (Herc. Fur., Troad., Phoen., Med., Phaedr., Oedip., Agam., Thyest., Herc. Oet.) as reflecting Seneca's order and his symmetrical intention to open and close the corpus with a Hercules play, to include two plays named after the chorus (Troad. and Phoen.), two named after the heroine (Med. and Phaedr.), and three named after the kings who are prominent in them (Oedip., Agam., Thyest.).

[3]Birt, ibid.; Lindskog, 70ff.

[4]Mesk, WS 37 (1915), 299; see also Herrmann, Le Théâtre de Sénèque, 44.

Jocasta (15ff., 363ff.), albeit in different contexts[1], and Oedipus' words ibo, ibo (12), which are echoed in 407 by Jocasta[2].

Mesk was thinking along the right lines. A close examination of the two sections of Phoen. reveals an underlying network of shared motifs, recurrent thought patterns and verbal echoes which give an internal cohesion to this highly episodic work. To begin with, the leitmotif of the tangled relationships in the royal house of Thebes is sustained throughout Phoen. by the complete avoidance of proper names in direct address (a feature unique to Phoen.) and the abundance of terms which denote consanguineity: despite the brevity of Phoen., the total number of words denoting family relationships is greater than in any other Senecan drama whose authorship is undisputed (i.e. excluding Oct. and Herc. Oet.)[3]. The word manus is a unifying word-motif in Phoen.[4]: it occurs twenty-five times in the work and in seventeen cases it is associated with violence, in particular, that of Oedipus towards his parents and himself and of the brothers towards each other. Its repeated use in both sections of the work helps to draw together the two strands of the legendary material by highlighting the theme of violence (countered by restraint exercised by Antigone in the first section and by Jocasta in the second) common to both. That violence is woven into the fabric of the history of the house of Thebes is made clear by Seneca in the opening scene (13ff.), when he evokes the figures of destruction of Thebes' past - Actaeon, Zethus, Agaue, Ino. Violence continues in the present with Oedipus' self-destructive urge and the conflict of Eteocles and Polyneices: thus, the account of the savage

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[1]Nevertheless, both envy Agaue's crime; see on 363.

[2]Mesk, WS 37 (1915), 299

[3]See further on nata 2 for statistics.

[4]See on manus 51 for precise references.

deaths and bloodshed with which the play opens provides the background for the continuation in the rest of the play of the pattern of violence into which the royal house is locked. Both Oedipus and Jocasta predict that violence lies in store for anyone who rules Thebes (277f. and 648f.).

As Mesk observed, the figure of Oedipus dominates the first part of the play while that of Jocasta dominates the second. The play is, in fact, unlike Euripides' Phoenissae, not primarily about the fraternal conflict; rather it is concerned with the respective reactions of the parents, Oedipus and Jocasta, to it[1]. The clear division into two parts, the attempt to create contrasts and parallels between them, the concentration on the emotions of Oedipus and Jocasta, the lack of specific detail about the nature of the brothers' agreement, the failure to present the respective claims and grievances of the brother[2], the fact that Eteocles and Polyneices never address each other directly, apart perhaps from Eteocles' exiling of Polyneices in 652f.,[3] all support this interpretation of the play. If Phoen. is seen as a drama of comparison and contrast about Oedipus and Jocasta the structure appears as less of a problem: the length of the scenes remains uneven, the opening is still unusual and the drama incomplete, but the sharp distinction into two parts is explicable as reflecting Seneca's dramatic purpose. It emphasises the diametrically opposite reactions of father and mother to their sons' strife and it suggest the gulf, emotional as well as physical, that has grown between husband and wife since Oedipus' discovery of

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[1] See Opelt, 'Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 285: 'Die Phoenissen aber sind letzlich die Tragödie der Elternliebe: Der Vater Oedipus ... die Mutter Iocasta ... setzen in beiden Teilen die scharfen Akzente, schaffen den Rahmen zur Tragödie des Brudermordes.'

[2] as Euripides does; see on 443ff.

[3] See commentary for a discussion of the allocation of 651ff.

his true identity[1].

Mesk pointed out the parallelism of design between the two sections of Phoen.[2] In addition to the features which he noted, there are others. The question of guilt, for instance. Oedipus, throughout the first scene (1-319) is obsessed with his own guilt and pollution, and Antigone's attempt to convince him that he is innocent because his crimes were committed in ignorance, fails[3]. He acknowledges his legal innocence[4] but nevertheless feels morally polluted by his scelera. Jocasta too expresses a sense of guilt and her piling up of guilt in 367ff. is parallel to that of Oedipus' in 270ff.; she also is technically innocens because she was unaware of Oedipus' identity when she married him, but, because of her sense of pollution, she proclaims herself nocens[5]. Oedipus' sense of guilt prompts him, not to condemn or to wish to resolve the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices, but perversely to revel in it and to express the wish that his offspring may outdo him in sinning[6]. Jocasta, like Oedipus, sees the wickedness of the brothers as the result of their tainted origins[7], but her guilt feelings make her want to save the situation by averting the impious war. Both parents regard as their own greatest crime the involvement of their children in the family nefas[8].

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[1] See on 537f.

[2] See Intro., 8f.

[3] See further on 203ff.

[4] 218 et dira fugio scelera quae feci innocens; see commentary ad loc. for a discussion of the textual problem.

[5] 367 hoc leue est quod sum nocens; however, cf. 451ff. where she refers to her error and see commentary ad loc.

[6] See 331ff., especially 335f. gloriam ac laudes meas/ superate and 353f. maiusque quam quod casus et iuuenum furor/ conatur aliquid cupio.

[7] In 335f. Oedipus says facietis [i.e. some crime worse than Oedipus' own] scio:/sic estis orti and in 369 Jocasta says peperi nocentes.

[8] See 272ff. and 369.

The portrayal of the opposite reactions of Oedipus and Jocasta to the strife of their sons is supported by verbal echoes of the first section in the second: ibo, ibo has already been mentioned[1]; Jocasta's words in me ruat/ iuuentus (443f.) and fratresque ... in se ruentes (549f.) recall Oedipus' savage exhortation frater in fratrem ruat (355), her horror at the brothers' maius nefas/quam quod miser uidere non potuit pater (531f.) contrasts with Oedipus desire for maiusque quam quod casus et iuuenum furor/conatur aliquid (353f.), and in 450 Jocasta's plea to her sons, dexteras matri date, contrasts with Oedipus' injunction, date arma matri (358)[2]. Both Oedipus and Jocasta dismiss as leue crimes that would normally be considered heinous[3]. In addition, the word eruo, which is strongly associated with Oedipus' gouging out of his eyes[4] is used by Jocasta in her entreaty to Polyneices not to destroy Thebes[5]: Oedipus' self-mutilation and Polyneices' impending attack on Thebes are thus drawn together as manifestations of the impulse to destruction to which the descendants of Laius are wedded[6]. The mutual inability of Oedipus and his sons to control their lives is implicit in the language used of them; in Stoic terms passion and not reason governs their actions and

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[1] See Intro., 9.

[2] So Fantham, 'Nihil iam iura naturae ualent: Incest and Fratricide in Seneca's Phoenissae', 65. See on 358 for a discussion of the problems of text and sense involved in these words.

[3] 270 leue es paternum facinus and 367f. hoc leue est quod sum nocens:/feci nocentes: hoc quoque etiamnunc leue est:

[4] See 179 minus eruisti lumina audacter tua; moreover, in 227ff, Oedipus bewails the fact that he can still hear and expresses the desire eruere the channels of sound.

[5] 555f. ne, precor, ferro/ eruere patriam ac penates.

[6] See further on erue 555.

dictates their responses: Oedipus' ira is proclaimed in virtually every word he utters and it is referred to specifically in 163, 186, 205, 347f., 350; Eteocles and Polyneices are driven by ira (299), they are grauiter furentes (290) and feruidos (411). Father and sons are linked by the ira and furor which motivates their respective destructive urges.

Not least of the connections between the two parts of Phoen. is the figure of Antigone, who appears both in the scenes with Oedipus in the countryside outside Thebes (1-362) and on the battlements at Thebes (363-442). In the former, her role is to restrain her father[1], in the latter, it is to urge on her mother. Her presence in Thebes has worried some critics who, on other grounds, support the unity of the play, since in 51ff. Antigone insists that she will never leave her father.

Antigone's 'abandonment' of Oedipus can, however, easily be justified: since he has insisted that he will remain in the woods outside Thebes safely hidden in a cave,[2] and has refused to intervene in the conflict of the brothers, Antigone feels that she must return to Thebes to help to resolve the situation. Seneca does not spell this out and to expect him to have done so would be to look for a degree of realism in his tragedies which does not exist.

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[1] Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 102 describes Antigone as 'an exemplum of Virtue, set off against the faulty attitudes of her father and the criminal passions of her brothers,' a view which, perhaps, idealizes Antigone somewhat, since her behaviour is un-Stoic in certain respects (see Intro., 54 n.3).

[2] So Braun, Rh. Mus. 20 (1865), 278. It is not necessary to assume, as do Pratt (Dramatic Suspense, 65 n.128) and Birt (NJbb. 27 (1911), 364), that there is a passage missing from the text, in which it was agreed that Antigone should return to Thebes; nor need one believe with Cima (RFIC 32 (1904), 255ff.) that Antigone's presence in Thebes is the result of carelessness on the part of Seneca.

The strongest link between the two sections of the play is the theme of the power struggle between the brothers, and it is Seneca's treatment of this theme which, more than anything else, lends support to the view that the two sections of Phoen. belong to a single play. The theme of the fraternal conflict is the motivating force behind both sections of the play: in the first section (1-362) no explicit explanation is given as to why Oedipus has decided to leave Thebes and why his fierce longing for death has been renewed, but it appears that, having abdicated voluntarily[1], he continued to live in Thebes until Eteocles refused to allow Polyneices to take his turn at ruling the city and the conflict between the brothers began[2]. There is what Pratt describes as 'a crescendo of reference' in the first section of Phoen. to the power struggle between Eteocles and Polyneices[3], which prepares for, and leads into, the second part of the play (363ff.) in which we are thrust into the midst of the conflict itself. It is this 'crescendo of reference', culminating in Oedipus' cry, frater in fratrem ruat (355), which provides the

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[1] 104 regna deserui libens

[2] Oedipus' bitterness at 107f. and his tone of mingled anger and self-condemnation at 273ff. and 295ff. suggest this; particularly significant are his words in 303ff.: scio quo ferantur, quanta moliri parent,/ ideoque leti quaero maturi uiam/ morique propero, dum in domo nemo est mea/ nocentior me. See also commentary on 321f.

[3] Dramatic Suspense, 65. See commentary on 53ff., 108ff., 273ff.

undercurrent of dramatic movement and carries us beyond the point of Oedipus' refusal to mediate, to the battlements of Thebes and thence to the battlefield.

In his dissertation on Phoen., Adolf Paul concludes that each of the two sections of Phoen. was originally intended as the beginning of a separate play[1] (hence the presence of Antigone in both[2]), and that the Jocasta-part, an example of Handlungsdrama, was composed before the Oedipus-part, an example of Affektdrama[3]. Paul recognizes that 320-62 serve as a prologue to the Jocasta-part[4], and that the mention of Jocasta in 358 ushers in the scene which begins the second part of the play. He believes that, as an experiment, Seneca decided to put the two beginnings together, using 320-62 as a bridging scene, to form a single play[5]. This theory, like that of Heinsius and Leo[6], ignores not only the verbal echoes and parallelism of design in the two parts, but also the fact that the theme of the fraternal conflict is not merely common to both sections but intensifies during the first section, even during the first act (1-319), in preparation for its domination in the second.

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[1] Eigenart von Senecas Phoenissen, 94

[2] Ibid., 64

[3] Ibid., 59,74. Opelt, 'Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 272f. convincingly points out the weaknesses in Paul's argument.

[4] Op. cit., 58, 94; see also Wurnig, Gefuhlsdarstellungen in den Tragödien Senecas, 78, 107.

[5] Op. cit., 95

[6] See Intro., 7 n.2.

One might note at this point that there is no incompatability between the two sections of Phoen. in terms of the form of the legend followed by Seneca. Although in Sen. Oedip. Jocasta commits suicide as she does in Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, in both parts of Phoen. Seneca appears to have followed Euripides, in whose Phoenissae Jocasta is alive in Thebes after Oedipus' self-blinding and voluntary abdication[1]. Leo[2] concluded from 552f. (nam pater debet sibi/ quod ista [i.e. Polyneices leading an army against Thebes] non spectauit) and 622ff. (uade et id bellum gere/in quo pater materque pugnanti tibi/ fauere possint) that Oedipus is present in Thebes in the second fragment, as he is in Euripides' Phoenissae at the time of the battle between Eteocles and Polyneices. However, neither passage cited by Leo suggests more than that Oedipus is still alive: debet sibi in 522 most plausibly refers either to Oedipus' voluntary exile or to his self-inflicted blindness, or to both[3].

Ismene does not appear in Sen. Phoen. and the only possible reference to her occurs at 551 (utraque ... soror)[4]. Her omission from the play has prompted the suggestion that it is in fact Ismene who is in Thebes with Jocasta, while Antigone, true to her word, remains in the woods with Oedipus[5]. This would be convenient in two ways: it would allay anxieties concerning Antigone's abandonment of Oedipus and it would enhance the sense of parallelism between the two parts of the play. E nowhere acknowledges Antigone's presence in

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[1] Oedipus' words in 358, data arma matri, indicate that Jocasta is thought of as being alive even in the first part of the play.

[2] Obs. Crit., 75

[3] Birt, Rh. Mus. 34 (1879), 524; Moricca, RFIC 45 (1917), 494ff.

[4] See commentary ad loc. for a discussion of the text at this point.

[5] So Herrmann, Le Théâtre de Sénèque, 427; Friedrich, Senecas dramatischer Technik, 132.

Thebes[1], but, according to A, it is she who speaks at 403 and 414b to urge her mother to hasten down to the battlefield before the opposing armies clash. Such MS evidence as there is thus points to Antigone and not Ismene as being at Jocasta's side. It is noteworthy, too, that Euripides does not include Ismene in his Phoenissae, probably because her character in tragedy, at least as far as we can tell from extant plays, is not a very exciting one: in Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus it is she who remains in Thebes, while Antigone shares the rigours of her father's exile. Although her role in the latter play may seem to be an argument in favour of her presence in Thebes in Sen. Phoen., it is difficult to imagine her, in view of her character as we know it, taking the line aut solue bellum, mater, aut prima excipe (406), whereas Antigone, who was prepared to accompany her father in his wanderings wherever he went, can easily be imagined as issuing a harsh injunction of that kind. Furthermore, although the inclusion of Ismene would extend the parallelism between the two parts of the play, it would destroy the sole link between them in terms of dramatis personae.

Chorus

Even if the unity of Phoen. is accepted, the play remains problematic. Tarrant, who has suggested that Phoen. as we have it is a completed play, has seen it as 'an essay in a distinct sub-genre of tragedy', like the fragmentary tragedy of the Hellenistic poet, Ezekiel, the Exagoge. He observes that Exagoge and Phoen. illustrate 'the extent to which "dissolution of the dramatic structure" might proceed once the post-classical tragic theater abandoned the unifying chorus of fifth-century drama'[2].

There is little evidence to support Tarrant's bold hypothesis. The apparent

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[1] Her name does not appear in the list of dramatis personae which precedes 363, and E omits to name the speaker at 403 and 414b.

[2] HSCPh 82 (1978), 230

absence of the chorus in Ezekiel's play cannot be used to support the view that Seneca never composed, or intended to compose, choral lyrics for Phoen. In the first place, we cannot be certain that there was no chorus (or choruses) in Exagoge; there are no historical objections to it, since at least some Hellenistic tragedies had choruses[1], and it is possible to suggest two suitable choruses for the play - Raguel's daughters and the Egyptian wizards[2] Furthermore, the fact that Phoen. is incomplete in other respects and that every other play in the Senecan corpus has a chorus points to the likelihood that Seneca intended to include choral lyrics in Phoen. also. That there is no indication at all of the presence of a chorus in the extant text need not imply that Seneca never intended there to be one. It is possible that Seneca actually composed choral odes, which, for some reason, were omitted from the archetype on which E and A are based. It seems more likely, however, that Seneca left the composition of the choral lyrics until he had completed the narrative portion of the play, which he never did. In view of the isolation of the Senecan chorus from the action and the recurrence of stock themes in the choral odes[3], the composition of choral lyrics in this way is quite plausible.

The nature and composition of the hypothetical chorus in Phoen. is, however, somewhat problematic. In view of the scene-change from the rough terrain outside Thebes to Thebes itself, it seems that one must assume either a peripatetic chorus or two choruses, as in Sen. Agam. In that play, the secondary chorus of Trojan women which accompanies Cassandra (589ff.) behaves in accordance with Euripidean custom: it is closely associated with one particular character (Cassandra) and is involved only in one ode and in the

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[1] Sifakis, Studies in the History of Hellenistic Drama, 122

[2] Jacobson, The Exagoge of Ezekiel, 31ff. See also Sifakis, op. cit., 122f.

[3] See Mendell, Our Seneca, 124-38, especially 132, 136.

scene which follows it[1]. One might, therefore, envisage a secondary chorus in Phoen. also, which would sing the first ode, after 319, and be closely associated with either Oedipus or Antigone. The scene would then switch to Thebes, with the principal chorus, consisting perhaps of Theban women or elders, singing the second (after 362) and subsequent odes. The main problem with the notion of two choruses in Phoen. is that it is extremely difficult to imagine of whom the secondary chorus could have been composed if, like the secondary chorus in Agam., it was closely connected with either Antigone or Oedipus. The notion of the first ode's being sung by a secondary chorus is also troubling.

The idea of a peripatetic chorus, which would enhance the sense of unity of the drama, is more attractive. No precedent for such a chorus exists in Senecan tragedy, but in Aeschylus' Eumenides the chorus of Furies travels in pursuit of Orestes from Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi to Athens, and in Sophocles' Ajax, the scene changes from a setting in front of the hut of Ajax to a desolate spot on the sea shore, to which the chorus (divided into two semichoruses) goes in search of Ajax.

Leo dismissed the possibility of there being a chorus in the region between Thebes and Cithaeron consisting of anyone praeter satyros bacchasue Euripidias[2] Certainly it is difficult to imagine what a chorus of Phoenician women (following the Euripidean play) would have been doing either on Cithaeron or on a path in the countryside nearby[3], but one might envisage a group of Theban women being on or near the mountain for some religious purpose associated with

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[1] See Tarrant on Agam. 586ff. for references to the plays of Euripides.

[2] Obs. Crit., 78

[3] Herrmann, Le Théâtre de Sénèque, 149f. suggests, moreover, that such a chorus would have been unacceptable to a Roman audience, who would not, like fifth-century Athenians, have been aware of the legendary connection between Thebes and Phoenicia. On the setting of the first act, see Intro. 7 n.1.

the worship of Dionysus. There was in the fifth century BC a biennial festival of Dionysus, the Agrionia, in which a sacred ritual of pursuit and counter-pursuit was carried out on Cithaeron by the women of Thebes and the priest of Dionysus[1]. It is not impossible that Seneca had this festival in mind, although, since Thebes was the traditional centre of Dionysiac worship and Cithaeron had close legendary links with Dionysus through Pentheus, such precise motivation for the participation of Theban women in a Dionysiac rite would have been unnecessary. The chorus in Senecan drama does not usually, as the chorus in Greek tragedy does, identify itself and account for its presence in the first choral ode[2]. However, if one imagines a chorus of Theban women, worshippers of Dionysus, as being the chorus in the first section of Phoen., one must imagine that the chorus would have made some allusion to the reason for its presence in the wild countryside near Cithaeron since it is an unusual place to find a group of women[3]. The Senecan chorus does not always react specifically to the content of the opening act[4] and this may be imagined to be the case with the opening song of the chorus in Phoen.: an ode which dealt with the violent and unhappy history of the house of Thebes, perhaps dwelling on the fate of Pentheus (appropriately for worshippers of Dionysus), would fit in well at this point, particularly since Oedipus has touched on it in his first speech (13ff.).

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[1] See Plutarch Quaest. Graec. 299F; Kerényi, Dionysos, 178

[2] Zwierlein, Rezitationsdramen, 74-6. The chorus in Troad. is an exception: Hecuba identifies them as captive Trojan women (63) and tells them to sing a lament for the fate of Troy (64f.).

[3] It would be out of keeping with the atmosphere of the scene, in which Oedipus' isolation is stressed, to imagine him and Antigone to be in uia (so Zwierlein, OCT; see Intro., 7 n.1), if by uia one understands a main road, bustling with activity, although it would make the problem of the chorus easier, since a group of Theban, or even Phoenician women might plausibly meet Oedipus and Antigone while travelling towards Thebes, which they would reach in time to be present to sing the ode after 320.

[4] Tarrant on Agam. 180f. notes that this occurs only in Troad., Med. and Oedip.

The chorus would sing the first ode after 319 and it would be present during the short second act (320-62); having sung the second ode after 362, which might have had as its theme the present danger threatening the city, the chorus, together with the Nuntius and Antigone, would set off for Thebes, leaving Oedipus hiding in his cave (359f.). The Theban women would then reappear at 363 and would sing the third ode at 442[1] and the fourth at 665.

The ending of the play

To return to Tarrant's thesis: certainly Phoen. violates the unity of place, although not necessarily, the unity of time (no great lapse of time need occur between the first and second sections of the play, if one imagines Oedipus and Antigone as being quite close to Thebes), and in this respect it is unique among Seneca's dramas[2]. To classify Phoen. as belonging to a 'distinct subgenre of tragedy' on these grounds, however, would be extreme, since there is evidence for the violation of both unities in Greek tragedy: Aeschylus' Eumenides reveals a disregard for both the unity of time and that of place[3] and Sophocles' Ajax contains a change of scene.[4]

Tarrant's view of Phoen. as a complete play is questionable. It seems in part at least, to be attributable to the fact that he discerns five and not four

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[1] Cf. Zwierlein, Rezitationsdramen, 34, who claims, not very convincingly, that Seneca did not intend there to be a pause for a choral ode after 442, since the speech of the Satelles (427ff.) plunges us immediately into the next scene.

[2] Herc. Oet., of doubtful authorship, requires a change of scene at 233.

[3] Aeschylus makes it clear that Orestes did not go directly from Delphi to Athens: Apollo predicts that he will travel widely over land and sea (75-7), and when Orestes arrives in Athens he says that he has done so (235-41); this is borne out by the furies in 249-51: γθονὸς γὰρ πᾶς πεποίμανται τόπος/ ὑπέρ τε πόντον ἀπτέροις ποτήμασιν/ ἦλθον .... One should therefore think of Orestes' journey as having taken several weeks at least.

[4] See Sutton, Seneca on the Stage, 14 n.12 on scene-changes in lost or fragmentary Greek tragedies.

acts in the extant text[1]. He acknowledges that the dramatic situation is left unresolved, but describes this as being 'characteristically Senecan' and compares the final scenes of Med., Agam. and Thyest.[2] However, none of these three plays is inconclusive in the same way as Phoen. is: in Med. we lack only an indication of where Medea, her crimes accomplished, is to find refuge, since there is no kindly Aegeus in Seneca's play to offer her asylum; Thyest. and Agam. are unresolved only in that each ends with an ominous declaration that violence within the family has not yet run its course. In all three, the dramatic situation is fully played out, which it is not in Phoen. In Phoen., the issue at the core of the drama - who will be king of Thebes? - is not decided, as the play breaks off abruptly with Eteocles' assertion in 664: Imperio pretio quolibet constant bene.

Paul, somewhat eccentrically, gives 653 to Polyneices; thus, according to him, Polyneices resigns his claim to the throne and there is no need for Seneca to continue further[3]. Paul draws a contrast between Euripides' Phoenissae and Sen. Phoen., claiming that the conflict in the former about who will wield power is transformed in the latter into an argument about how power is best to be wielded - in other words, the military struggle becomes, in Seneca's version, a battle of words, which culminates in Polyneices' capitulation, after which Seneca loses interest in the play. Moricca, similarly, holds that Phoen. ends with Polyneices' capitulation and his second exile, Seneca having revised and remoulded the traditional form of the legend 'in conformità del suo talento poetico e dei suoi speciali gusti artistici'[4]. The inspiration for this revolutionary approach came, believes Moricca, from Livy's account in 2.39f. of how Veturia, Coriolanus' mother, persuaded her son not to attack

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[1] See above Intro., 6 n.2.

[2] HSCPh 82(1978), 230 n.88

[3] Eigenart von Senecas Phoenissen, 68

[4] RFIC 45 (1917), 484ff.

his own city, Rome. There is, he claims, not simply a general similarity of situation, but 'una corrispondenza esatta ... nelle singole frasi'. However, the examples he gives do not reveal striking verbal borrowings by Seneca, and even if they did, this would not imply that Seneca had followed Livy to the extent of departing radically from the traditional form of the legend. Friedrich, like Paul, explains the absence of an ending to the play as the result of Seneca's lack of interest, but, unlike Paul, he acknowledges that the mutual murder of the brothers and the suicide of the mother must have been part of Seneca's dramatic intention at the outset[1].

It seems pointless to speculate about Seneca's motives for not writing the final act of Phoen., particularly since it is possible that he did in fact compose one which has been lost in transmission (although this is less than likely in view of the missing choral lyrics, whose wholesale absence cannot so easily be explained in this way[2]). What is important is the understanding that Seneca did intend there to be a final act dealing with the expected battle and the three deaths. Not only would any other ending be an intolerably bold departure from the traditional form of the legend (and such a departure is not evidenced elsewhere in Senecan drama), but, in dramatic terms, the intensification of the theme of the impending battle demands that it actually occur[3]. Opelt suggests that, after a choral ode, perhaps about the power of fate, the play might have ended with an act consisting of a messenger speech (cf. Euripides' Phoenissae 1356ff.), describing the battle and announcing the deaths of Eteocles, Polyneices and Jocasta, a speech

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[1] Friedrich, Senecas dramatischer Technik, 123f.

[2] See Hirschberg, Sen. Phoen., 7f. '... dass just nur die zwei Akte dank eines Exzerptors überliefert worden sein sollten, ist sehr unwahrscheinlich, dass das Stück aber auf mechanischem Wege zufällig so kunstgerecht sollte verstümmelt worden sein, ist geradzu ausgeschlossen. Plausibler ist die Erklärung, dass der Dichter die Tragödie nicht fertiggestellt hat.'

[3] See Pratt, Dramatic Suspense, 66

addressed possibly to Oedipus in the woods; this would tie in with Oedipus' declaration at 367f.: hinc aucupabor uerba rumoris uagi/ et saeua fratrum bella, quod possum, audiam and would unite the two strands of the play[1]. Alternatively, there could have been a speech by Oedipus himself in the woods, in which he lamented the tragic outcome of the battle and, possibly, reverted to his intention to die. These are attractive conjectures, although both would, of course, involve yet another change of scene.

Prologue

Tarrant observes[2] that although the addition of choral lyrics and a final scene would bring Phoen. up to the length of an average Senecan drama, 'it would not affect the unconventional structure of its episodes'. By this, Tarrant would seem to be referring to the lack of conventional dramatic connections between the two halves of the play, the uneven length of the scenes, the absence of a true prologue.

The apparent lack of connection between the two halves of Phoen. has already been dealt with. With regard to the uneven length of the scenes, it is true that no other play of Seneca reveals such extremes of short and long scenes. It should be noted, however, that, leaving aside the missing fifth act, the remaining four - 1-319 (319 lines), 320-62 (43 lines), 363-442 (80 lines), 443-664 (222 lines) - fall into a clear pattern, with the two main acts, featuring Oedipus and Jocasta respectively, enclosing the two short transitional acts which are necessary for the furtherance of the action.

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[1] 'Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 284. See also Birt, Rh. Mus. 34 (1879), 528, who, however, saw the deaths of the brothers and Jocasta's suicide as being a continuation of the scene between Jocasta and her sons (443-664), which he, like Tarrant, regarded as the fifth scene (although he later changed his mind about this; see NJbb. 27 (1911) 364.

[2] HSCPh 82 (1978), 230

Concerning the prologue, the views of scholars differ. Leo held that one of the reasons that Phoen. could not be regarded as a tragic drama but must be a collection of declamatory pieces was that there is no statement of locality in the first act, as there is in Seneca's other plays[1]. Nor, one might add, are the characters with whom the play opens identified by name, but, likewise, Hippolytus does not introduce himself in the prologue to Phaedr., nor does Oedipus at the beginning of Oedip. In these dramas, however, as in Phoen., the circumstantial evidence - here, a blind father, who has committed some dreadful crime (3-10), who calls Cithaeron meus (13), and who is accompanied and guided only by his daughter (1-2) - would have made it clear to the audience who the characters involved were[2]. Similarly, the general location would have been clear: in the vicinity of Cithaeron, in rough countryside[3].

Birt[4], responding to Leo's concern about the lack of an explicit statement of location, maintained that Seneca intended there to be a prologue (followed by a choral ode) preceding Oedipus' appearance with Antigone, and that this would have been set in Thebes and would have featured the Ghost of Laius commanding Oedipus to leave the city. This seems to be a drastic way of dealing with Seneca's imprecise statement of location, which is no more imprecise that that in Phaedr. Birt's theory demands a change of scene after the prologue, and since he believes that the final act of the play is also missing, it necessitates his squeezing the extant verses into only three acts: 1-362, 363-442, 443-664[5].

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[1] Obs. Crit., 76f.

[2] Pratt, Dramatic Suspense, 112 observes: '... the presumption of background seems clearly to indicate composition for a cultured audience, such a gathering as attended the declamations of the period ...

[3] The setting of the prologue to Phaedr. is no more clearly stated: 2ff. indicate only that the drama will take place in or near Athens. On the setting of 1-362 of Phoen., see 7 n.1.

[4] NJbb. 27 (1911), 363

[5] Ibid., 364. For the case in favour of a new act beginning at 320, see n.6.

Moricca[1] believed 1-50 to constitute the prologue, with the first choral ode being delayed until after 319. To the imagined objection that in Senecan drama a choral ode follows the prologue directly, he responds, correctly, that this is true of some Senecan dramas, but not of Phaedr. and Oedip. (one might add also Troad.). In Phaedr., after the prologue sung by Hippolytus in anapaests - this is the only one of Seneca's prologues in which a lyric metre is found - Phaedra and the Nurse, in a sort of extension of the prologue, join in a dialogue; the first choral ode thus does not occur until 274. It seems that the 'opening passages' - Costa rightly observes that the term 'prologue' is misleading in some Senecan plays[2] - of Phaedr. are as problematic as those of Phoen.[3] and indicate that Seneca was not wedded to a fixed idea when it came to the prologue and the parados; this, the prologues of Troad. and Oedip. confirm[4].

Pratt's analysis of the prologues of Seneca's plays[5] reveals that Seneca's procedure is to provide in the prologue hints, or sometimes clear indications of the subsequent action of the plays, and that this is more easily accomplished in those plays in which the prologue is spoken by a superhuman

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[1] RFIC 45 (1917), 508f.

[2] Costa, Sen.: Med., 61

[3] The opening words of Phaedra at 85 would seem to be the opening of the first episode, the parados having been omitted, but if this were the case, the play would divide into six acts rather than five. The fact that Hippolytus' speech uses a lyric metre and is in content like a choral ode - it has no direct bearing on the plot of the drama - has prompted the suggestion that it takes the place of the parados and that there is, in fact, no prologue (so Pratt, Dramatic Suspense, 82; Friedrich, Senecas dramatischer Technik, 10).

[4] In Troad., the prologue spoken by Hecuba leads straight into the first choral ode (132ff.), which is shared between Hecuba and the chorus, with Hecuba directing the chorus' lamentations. In Oedip., the prologue is spoken by Oedipus, but the parodos does not follow immediately - Jocasta enters and speaks to her husband (81-6) and Oedipus responds (87-109); only at 110 does the parodos begin.

[5] in Dramatic Suspense

protatic character (viz. Herc. Fur., Agam., Thyest.) than in those in which the prologue is spoken by a human character (viz. Med., Phaedr., Troad., Oedip.), who cannot seem to have unnatural prescience of the action in which he/she is to participate, but who nevertheless contrives to foreshadow the dénouement of the drama[1]. Such foreshadowing is present also in the opening scene of Phoen., in which the attack on Thebes and the mutual murder of the brothers, with which the play must have been intended to end[2], are alluded to in 53ff., 108ff. and 273ff. However, to regard, as Moricca does, 1-50 only as constituting the prologue is difficult to justify: Oedipus' opening speech leads straight into Antigone's response, and on its own, although it creates through the affectus of Oedipus, an awareness of some great disaster, there is no reference to the impending battle until 53ff. Thus, 1-319 as a whole should be seen as the opening scene - a long one, admittedly, but in Phaedr. the first choral ode does not occur until 274, which makes its opening scene comparably extended.

Of Senecan prologues Herington says[3]: 'We see a solitary, over-life-size figure brooding on the stage. Neither its physical nor its intellectual lineaments become clear to the audience in the course of its opening speech. Instead, that speech creates an aura of evil around it; either the soul (and, of course, the landscape) is clouded with the terror of past wickedness, or passion is gathering, threatening wickedness in the future.' The figure of Oedipus in the opening scene of Phoen. is certainly larger than life in its excessive self-hatred and torment, and although, strictly speaking, it is not solitary, because of Antigone's presence, Oedipus' total self-absorption give his utterances the character of monologues, and certainly 1-319 are heavy both

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[1]See Pratt, Dramatic Suspense, 56ff. (on Troad.), 66ff. (on Med.), 80ff. (on Phaedr.) 91ff. (on Oedip.)

[2]See Intro., 23f.

[3]Arion 5 (1966), 449f.

with unresolved guilt of the past and with the impending nefas of the coming battle: the affectus of Oedipus[1] is rooted in his past crimes, but is stimulated by the foreboding of his sons' impious conflict[2].

In terms of content, the opening scene of Phoen. is not strictly a prologue, since it is also part of the development of the action in that Oedipus' decision to live makes possible the approach of the Nuntius in the following act. This phenomenon is discernible also in the opening scene of Phaedr., in which the audience's thoughts are directed to ensuing developments, since the Nurse in 85ff. resolves to approach Hippolytus.

The opening scene of Phoen., then, cannot strictly be called a prologue: it contains elements commonly found in Senecan prologues, but it is considerably longer than the other prologues (with the exception of Phaedr.)[3] and it develops the action rather than simply introducing it. Despite this, and the fact that neither the identity of the characters nor the exact nature of the location are explicitly stated, it is difficult to imagine a prologue preceding a scene that is so filled with the kind of dramatic suspense associated with Senecan prologues. Furthermore, unless one were then to imagine 363-664 as constituting a single act (surely impossible in view of the unique scene-change at 442), there would be six acts in Phoen. rather than five (unless, of course, like Hirschberg[4] one were to regard 1-362, as well as 363-664, as being a single act; thus there would be only two acts, but four

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[1]Tarrant, Sen. Agam. 158 observes: 'In Seneca [i.e. in the prologues], the affectus of the speaker rather than the information he can impart is the centre of interest.'

[2]We can deduce from the extreme emotional anguish of Oedipus in 1-50 that something more than the memory of his past crimes is disturbing him, but what this is is not fully revealed until 274ff.

[3]The length of the prologue of each of the plays is as follows: Herc. Fur. 124, Troad. 66, Med. 55, Oedip. 109, Agam. 56, Thyest. 175

[4]See Intro., 6 n.2.

scenes). It seems best, therefore, to regard 1-319 not as a prologue but as the opening scene of Phoen., which both introduces and develops the action.

In the introduction to his commentary on Sen. Phoen., Hirschberg (6f.) contends that the scene between Oedipus and Antigone (1-319), is the first scene of the second act of the play, since, as well as being too long to be the opening scene and having the first twelve verses addressed, in unorthodox fashion, to Antigone, it exhibits the hallmark of second acts in Senecan drama in that it depicts a secondary character attempting, in vain, to deter the main character from his/her passionate or evil purpose by rational argument[1]. Superficially, this seems to be the case, but in fact Phoen. does not fit into this pattern completely comfortably. Seneca's main purpose in 1-319 is, as Hirschberg recognizes, to portray Antigone's dissuasion of Oedipus from suicide by reasoning with him and in this respect the scene resembles other second acts[2]. However, unlike the secondary characters in the other plays, Antigone does not plead in vain, for Oedipus does indeed renounce his aim of seeking death and reason does, in this respect, defeat passion. Admittedly, Antigone does not succeed in persuading her father to intervene between the brothers - in that regard, his passion is triumphant - but the main thrust of her argument is not directed to that end. If, in fact, one compares Phoen. with Herington's 'recipe' for a Senecan tragedy, which he sees as falling into three movements: the cloud of evil (= prologue), the defeat of reason by passion, the explosion of evil[3], it seems that 1-319 could well be the first movement, with the second encompassing 320-664 (showing the triumph both of Oedipus' furor and and that of the brothers); the third movement is missing, but would comprise the account of the death of the brothers, and Jocasta's suicide and would be 'the explosion of evil' movement.

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[1]On this, see Anliker, Prologe und Akteinteilung, 52; Herington, Arion 5 (1966), 453f.

[2]These Herington identifies in Phaedr., Med., Agam., Thyest., Troad.

[3]Ibid., 449

Conclusion

It can be seen that for most of the individual structural difficulties associated with Phoen. an explanation, a parallel, or some sort of justification can be found. The sum of its peculiarities, however, even leaving aside its fragmentary state, makes it unique in the corpus of Senecan drama. The fact that Seneca has united two tragic themes - Oedipus in exile and the strife of Eteocles and Polyneices - in a single drama, suggests that the play should be regarded as an innovation and an experiment in the manipulation of the traditional legendary material, an experiment which, perhaps, Seneca abandoned when the technical difficulties involved in it became clear.

3. SENECA'S TREATMENT OF THE THEBAN LEGEND

Seneca and his dramatic precursors

Until the appearance last decade of Tarrant's important article[1] on the literary context of, and influences on, Senecan drama, it was widely accepted that each of Seneca's plays was directly based on an extant or lost play of the classical Greek tragedians. Any deviation from the Greek model was explained away as contaminatio, such as was practised by Plautus and Terence, with a second or even a third Greek drama[2], the presupposition being that Seneca possessed a knowledge of Attic drama that was both wide and intimate. That Seneca possessed such a knowledge is borne out neither by Seneca's quotations of, or references to, Greek tragedy in his prose works - these consist almost exclusively of well-known sententiae (by contrast, quotations from Vergil and Ovid are abundant and wide-ranging) - nor by what we know to have been normal for an educated Roman of the first century AD[3]. The loss of most of the tragedy written between Euripides and Seneca has encouraged the tendency to see Senecan drama as the direct descendant of Attic tragedy, a tendency which Tarrant has questioned, believing that, in terms of dramatic technique, Senecan drama was greatly influenced by developments which occurred after Euripides' time, and that, with regard to plot and characterisation,, Seneca relied heavily upon Augustan drama, none of which has survived. The first part of his thesis is convincingly substantiated, the second less so,

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[1] HSCPh 82 (1978), 213-63

[2] Op. cit., 216f.

[3] For Seneca quoting Greek tragedy, see: Ep 49.12 where the tag Veritatis simplex oratio est is attributed vaguely to ille tragicus (i.e. Euripides; it occurs in Ph. 469 ἁπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔρις); Ep. 115.14 where twelve lines from Euripides about money are quoted in Latin (see Adesp. frg. 181.1 N² for the first of these; also Euripides 324 where Nauck suggests that Seneca made a mistake about the play from which the verses come); Apocol. 4.2 where the verse from E. Cres. χαίροντας, εὐφημοῦντας ἐκπέμπειν δόμων (frg. 449 N²) is cited in Greek. In QN. 4.2.16 he declares that Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides shared the opinion that the rising of the Nile in summer was due to snow melting on the mountains of Ethiopia; this belief was, in fact, apparently found in each of the tragedians (see Aesch. frg. 300 N², Supp. 559ff.; S. frg. 797 N²; E.Hel. 1ff.) but Seneca could easily have discovered it indirectly.
See also Jocelyn, Ennius. 54f., and Tarrant, Sen. Agam. 9f.; but cf. Costa, 'The Tragedies', 109, who says that Seneca 'was steeped in Greek drama'.

and a note of warning has been sounded by Herington[1] and Fantham[2], who suggest that Tarrant demolishes the theory of direct Senecan dependence on Greek tragedy only to replace it with a theory of dependence on Augustan drama[3]. One has only to look at modern commentaries on Seneca's plays to see that Seneca was greatly indebted to the Augustan poets in general, and to Ovid in particular, in terms of language and style; it is likely therefore that Augustan drama influenced Seneca considerably, but to suggest that Seneca used plays of the Augustans as 'models' for any of his dramas[4] is to go too far. 'Models' implies a considerable degree of dependency and the argumentum ex silentio is a dangerous one.

The most common view of Sen. Phoen. is that it is based in part (1-362) on Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus and in part on Euripides' Phoenissae (363-664)[5], although it has been claimed that the whole play is modelled on Euripides' Phoenissae[6], and, conversely, that it was influenced by Aeschylus' Septem

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[1] reviewing Tarrant Sen. Agam. in Phoenix 32 (1978), 274

[2] Sen. Troad., 69ff.

[3] Tarrant (Sen. Agam., 13f.), like others before him, does not believe that Seneca was directly influenced by Republican drama, since, as with Greek tragedy, the quotations from it in his prose works tend to be popular tags or passages which are also quoted by other Latin authors (see Mazzoli, Seneca e la Poesia, 188-98), and he is known to have expressed contempt for Ennius (see Gell. 2.11). Augustan drama, however, was influenced by it and features of Republican drama may have entered Senecan plays in this way.

[4] See Tarrant, HSCPh 82 (1978), 261: 'To suggest that every play of Seneca had an Augustan model would be extreme. His Medea and Thyestes ..., however, were undoubtedly shaped by the corresponding plays by Ovid and Varius; Agamemnon, Troades and Hercules Furens may well have been based on Augustan versions of material which had been handled by Accius.

[5] See Leo, Obs. Crit., 77; Friedrich, Senecas dramatischer Tech., 133; Calder, CJ 72 (1976), 6; Dingel, 'Sen. Trag.: Vorbilder und poetisches Aspekte', 1076;

[6] See Braun, Rh. Mus. 20 (1865), 271-87; Cima, RFIC 32 (1904), 255ff.

and Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus as well as the Coloneus and Euripides' Phoenissae[1]. Superficially, the first two acts of Phoen. do seem to be based on the Oedipus Coloneus: both plays open with the blind Oedipus being led by Antigone, in both plays Oedipus' intervention in the fraternal struggle is sought and in both is it rejected, in both is there an official request for Oedipus to return to Thebes. Yet, when one subjects these overt similarities to a close examination, they appear less striking.

At the beginning of the Sophoclean drama, Oedipus and Antigone are on the road to Athens and have reached Colonus, where they are joined by the Stranger (36) who tells them where they are and goes to summon the elders of Colonus (30). The setting in which Oedipus and Antigone are depicted is thus very different from the rugged countryside outside Thebes where Oedipus and Antigone are wandering in Sen. Phoen. Moreover, the isolation of father and daughter is of short duration in the Attic drama, whereas in the Senecan play they are alone for 319 lines. In addition, in the opening episode of the Sophoclean play, Oedipus' state of mind is one of quiet resignation (3ff.), since he does not know of the conflict between his sons; in Sen., Phoen. on the other hand, we are plunged into the midst of his frenzied desire for death, a desire reawakened by his sons' quarrel. The nature of Oedipus' exile, too, is very different in the two plays: in the Greek drama we learn that Oedipus was banished from Thebes some time after the discovery of his identity, and that his sons did nothing to prevent his being exiled but, once he was gone, began fighting over the throne, which Creon, as regent, had held[2]; in the Roman play, Oedipus' exile is self-imposed (104) and is prompted by the outbreak of the strife between the brothers (304ff.). The brothers' agreement to rule

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[1] See Moricca, RFIC 46 (1918), 1-40.

[2] 427ff., 367ff., but cf. 1354ff. where Oedipus blames Polyneices alone for his exile, suggesting that Polyneices was already king when Oedipus was banished; on the inconsistency, see Kitto, Greek Tragedy, 390.

alternately in Sen. Phoen.[1] has no counterpart in Sophocles' play, in which Polyneices, as the older brother, is said to have claimed the throne as his birthright (1292f).

Oedipus' intervention in the struggle between Etoecles and Polyneices is sought in both plays and in both he refuses to involve himself. However, the circumstances under which the appeal is made and the nature of it are vastly different in the two dramas: in Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus, it is Polyneices who requests Oedipus' involvement, not to mediate, but to give his blessing to Polyneices' cause, since, according to the oracle, victory will fall to the side with which Oedipus allies himself (1331ff.). In Seneca's play the appeal has a different character, since it is delivered by a Messenger on behalf of the city of Thebes (320f.) and Oedipus is asked to step in to prevent the war (327). There is an official appeal in the Sophoclean play also, issued by Creon, who asks Oedipus to return to the neighbourhood of Thebes (740ff.), but this is not related to the power struggle between the brothers: the Thebans have been told that if Oedipus' grave should be desecrated, they will suffer for it (402) - they wish Oedipus to die near to Thebes so that they can protect his grave. This is a theme which does not occur in Sen. Phoen.

When one examines closely the apparent correspondences between Sen. Phoen. and Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus, they do not amount to much. The personality of Antigone, who in both plays appears as a loving, loyal and courageous daughter, provides, in fact, the only point of contact of any substance. In both the Greek and the Roman drama, Oedipus yields before Antigone's

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[1] This can be inferred from 280, 378.

persuasiveness: in the former she cajoles her father into seeing Polyneices (1181ff.), and in the latter she prevails upon him to abandon his resolve to commit suicide (306ff.).

If the similarities between the two dramas are slight, the differences between them are considerable: the quasi-daemonic stature of Oedipus in the Sophoclean play is far removed from the Oedipus furibundus of Sen. Phoen.: the character of the just Theseus, vital to the plot of the Greek drama, does not appear in the Roman play, from which, in addition, Ismene and Creon are missing and in which Polyneices appears only in the second half and does not confront Oedipus at all; the 'apotheosis' of Oedipus in the Oedipus Coloneus is not found in Sen. Phoen., in which, on the contrary, Oedipus is persuaded to live. It is the 'apotheosis', the heroization of Oedipus at the last, which is the raison d'être of the Attic drama; the dramatic purpose of the first part of Sen. Phoen. - to show Oedipus' response to the conflict of his sons, against which Jocasta's reaction will be set in the second section - is very different. Moreover, the motivation for the curse of Oedipus on his sons in Sophocles' play is not imitated by Seneca: in the Greek drama, Oedipus curses his sons because they have neglected to protect and care for him (1354ff.); in the Senecan play, the 'curse', modified to suit Seneca's purpose[1], is prompted by Oedipus' twisted revelling in his own guilt and his perverse delight in his sons' wickedness (328ff.).

Moricca[2] collected passages from Sen. Phoen. and Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus, which, he believed, reveal verbal echoes of the latter in the former. Of those cited, only one suggests that Seneca may possibly have had the Greek

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[1] See on 355,

[2] RFIC 46 (1918), 17-21

play in mind as he wrote: Sen. Phoen. 1f. Caeci parentis regimen et fessi unicum/ lateris leuamen, nata is reminiscent of the opening verse of Sophocles' tragedy, τέκνον τυφλοῦ γέροντος Ἀντιγόνη . What is striking about these two passages, however, is not the verbal correspondence between them - the genitive caeci, echoing τυφλοῦ in the Greek play, is virtually a stock epithet of Oedipus, but for the rest the similarity is not remarkable - but the fact that in each case the address to Antigone opens the play. Since, however, the similarity between the passages depends almost entirely upon position, it would be rash to claim, on the basis of this one instance, that Seneca knew the Oedipus Coloneus well.[1] A general awareness of the contents of the play - and he need not even have read it himself to have this[2] - would be sufficient to produce a correspondence such as the one discussed above, and, indeed, the superficial similarities of plot and characterization might result in a coincidental correspondence between the opening words of the two plays.

Seneca may never have read the Coloneus, but he seems to have known Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, since there are in Sen. Phoen. three passages where the influence of that play is suggested: in 31ff. Oedipus' feeling that he should have died on Cithaeron as an infant recalls Oedipus Tyrannus 1349ff. and 1391ff.; the conundrum of Oedipus' family relationships expressed in the Greek tragedy (1403ff.) is echoed in the Roman (134ff.); the desire of Oedipus to be deprived of the faculty of hearing in addition to that of sight (Sen. Phoen. 244ff.) has its origins in 1403ff. of the Sophoclean play. It could possibly be argued that the first two pairs of corresponding passages can be accounted

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[1] Cf. Wurnig, Gefühlsdarstellungen in den Tragödien Senecas, 80f., who notes that the verbal similarity only highlights the different line taken by Seneca: in S. OC. Antigone is an indispensable help to her father; in Sen. Phoen. Oedipus rejects her support (3f.).

[2] See Intro., 49.

for by the similarity of situation arising out of the common legendary material (with regard to the first passage, it is worth noting also that death wishes are common in Senecan drama in general; cf., e.g., Herc. Fur. 1201ff., 1310ff.; Troad. 963f.; Phaedr. 682ff., 1159ff., 1201ff.; Oedip. 868ff.); the third example, however, cannot so easily be explained in this way - Oedipus' wish to isolate himself further is not part of the essential legendary tradition - and suggests that Seneca had a detailed knowledge of Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus. However, this is not borne out by a comparison of Sen. Oedip. with Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, since the former differs from the latter to such a marked degree that there is little justification for regarding the Greek play as a 'model' for the Latin[1]. It may possibly be that the correspondence is coincidental, bearing in mind the interest in mutilation and violence manifested in declamation, in Silver epic and in Senecan drama in general[2].

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[1]Nevertheless, until about a decade ago scholars persisted, partly, it would appear, under the influence of the old view of Seneca as an imitator and adaptor of Greek drama, partly because no other Greek or Latin versions of an Oedipus Tyrannus has survived intact, in seeing Sen. Oedip. as based on the Sophoclean tragedy; so, e.g., Jebb, (Sophocles: The Oedipus Tyrannus, xxxiv-xxxvi), who admits that there are striking differences between the two plays, but who yet says 'Seneca has followed, and sometimes paraphrased Sophocles with sufficient fidelity to heighten the contrast between the original and the rhetorical transcript (xxxiv)'; so also Herrmann, Le Théatre de Sénèque, 295ff. whose restrained conclusion concerning the sources of Sen. Oedip. - 'Si Oedipe-Roi reste la source principale de Sénèque, cette source même lui a moins servi qu'on ne l'a dit (305) - is belied by his careful and detailed analysis of the differences between the two plays, which suggests no clear dependence at all of the Roman playwright on the Sophoclean tragedy; see also Vessey, Statius and the Thebaid, 73. Cf., however, more recently Henry and Walker, 'The Oedipus of Seneca: An Imperial Tragedy', 128ff. who declare of Sen. Oedip.: 'What Seneca makes of his plot, characterisation and theme, derives only in the merest externals from Greek dramatic tradition' and 'its unlikeness to the Greek play [i.e. S. OT.] often called Seneca's 'model' is so extreme' .... (128).

[2]See, e.g. Sen. Contr. 1.7, 8.2, 9.4, Suas. 7.3; Luc. 2.94ff., 3.652ff., 7.617ff.; Sen. Phaedr. 1085ff., Troad. 1110ff.

Braun, who believed that the whole of Sen. Phoen. was modelled on Euripides' Phoenissae, attempts to show the dependence of the first act of the former on the final episode of the latter, in which Antigone insists on sharing Oedipus' banishment and leads him into exile . There are, however, no notable linguistic similarities between the two plays at this point, and, moreover, the general situation of the respective scenes is quite different: in the Greek play Oedipus is compelled by Creon to leave Thebes and his immediate grief lies in his banishment, whereas in the Roman drama Oedipus is a voluntary exile and his mental anguish is caused by the realization that the evil in his house has re-emerged in his sons.

The influence of Euripides on the second section of Sen. Phoen (363-664) is evident, but the Roman play nevertheless differs from its Greek predecessor in several important respects, apart from the fact that it does not deal with some of the themes of the Greek play at all (the Eteocles - Creon episode and the sacrifice of Menoeceus are notable omissions). In both dramas Jocasta is still alive[2], both deal with the battle between Eteocles and Polyneices, but the emphasis is different in each: in the Euripidean drama the focus is on the brothers and their claims (the ἀγών between them (469-525) is central to the episode), whereas in Sen. Phoen. it is Jocasta's anxiety and maternal distress which is highlighted; she does most of the talking and the brothers never address each other (except perhaps for Eteocles' banishment of Polyneices in 652f.[3]).

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[1] Rh. Mus. 20 (1865), 275-77

[2] This appears to be a Euripidean innovation, since in earlier treatments of the legend she kills herself when Oedipus' true identity is discovered. Cf. Sen. Oedip. where Jocasta dies at the end of the play.

[3] See on 651ff. for line allocation of final verses.

In neither play is Oedipus involved in the attempt to halt the conflict, but for different reasons: in the Senecan version, he not only refuses to intervene when asked to do so by the Theban people, but actually revels in the prospect of the battle and of the mutual slaughter of his sons; in Euripides, Oedipus' intervention is precluded by the fact that the conflict has arisen as a result of his curse[1]. Thus, in Euripides' Phoenissae it is the curse which causes the violence, in the Roman play it is the violence which evokes Oedipus' wish that his sons should attack each other.

The setting and timing of Jocasta's intervention is quite different in the two plays: in the Greek play, Polyneices' army is outside the walls of Thebes, but the battle is not yet about to begin and Polyneices comes into the city to meet his mother and brother; in Sen. Phoen. the dramatic tension is heightened by having Jocasta rush to the battlefield to place herself between the opposing armies who are about to clash.

The τειχοσκοπία in Euripides' play (88-201) takes place on the roof of the royal palace (90), from where the Paidagogos points out to Antigone the individual warriors in Polyneices' army. Antigone is portrayed as being very young[2], eager[3], and naïve[4]. Her youthful uncertainty is revealed by her reluctance to appear in public at Jocasta's command (1274ff.). The Antigone

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[1] 67f. ἀρὰς ἀρᾶται παισὶν ἀνοσιωτάτας, / θηκτῷ σιδήρῳ δῶμα διαλαχεῖν τόδε.

[2] 103 νέα; 139, 193 τέκνον; 154 ὦ παῖ

[3] In 103 she clamours to be helped up to the roof and once there she asks many questions.

[4] She prays that Artemis may destroy Parthenopaeus, one of the warriors in the Argive host (153), but expresses only affection for Polyneices (163ff.), the leader of the enemy army.

of Seneca, who urges her mother to throw herself between the two armies, thereby either stopping the war or becoming its first victim (405f.), stands in contrast to the dewy maiden in Euripides' Phoenissae, who does, however, in the final episode necessarily assume a more commanding role as her father's guide (1539f., 1710ff.).

The scene in Sen. Phoen. in which Jocasta, Antigone and the Satelles take part (363-442), may have been influenced in part by the τειχοσκοπία in the Greek play. In Seneca's play we can only deduce the setting from the fact that it affords an excellent view (on 397 si uera metuentes uident, see commentary ad loc.) of the battlefield and is close to it (it does not take Jocasta long to reach it); thus it probably takes place on the city walls rather than on the palace roof as in Euripides' play[1]. The persona of the Satelles, who appears to be a trusty family retainer[2], may derive from that of the Paidagogos in the Greek play. However, he does not survey the hostile army in the detailed and systematic way characteristic of Euripides' τειχοσκοπία and of other such scenes (cfr. Hom. Il. 3.161ff.; Stat Theb. 7.243ff.).

In Aeschylus' Septem the emphasis is on the shared fate of the brothers and on their mutual wrongdoing[3]; the respective claims of the brothers are not presented. In Euripides' Phoenissae it is otherwise: the brothers have agreed to rule alternately, a year at a time (484ff.), an agreement which Eteocles breaks by refusing to give up the throne at the end of his year of kingship (69ff.). The justice of Polyneices' cause is stated clearly, both by the Paidagogos (154f.) and by the chorus (256ff.). Eteocles, on the other hand,

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[1]The possibility raised by Sutton, Seneca on the Stage, 15 that Antigone and Jocasta are in the woods is not convincing. If Jocasta were in the woods it would be because she had met, or tried to meet, with Oedipus, in a scene which we do not have. This seems unlikely. Furthermore, the question uide ut ... (394) of the Satelles indicates that the scene is located in a place from which the activity on the battlefield can be seen.

[2]See on 387ff.

[3]881ff; see Thalmann, Dramatic Art in Aeschylus' 'Seven Against Thebes', 21.

is presented as a thoroughly wicked man. Nevertheless, it is Eteocles who is the defender of Thebes and Polyneices who is the attacker.

The tension between the rightness of Polyneices' claims and the wrongness of his aggression against Thebes is central to Euripides' interpretation of the fraternal conflict. Something of this is found in Sen. Phoen. also, as when Jocasta says derat aerumnis meis,/ ut et hostem [i.e. Polyneices] amarem (370) and causa repetentis bona est,/ mala sic petentis (373f.). In this play also Polyneices is presented sympathetically - his fear and the misery of his position as an exile are described - and Eteocles is painted in unrelieved black. (It is noteworthy that in both plays Eteocles sums up his position with a sententia which reveals his unscrupulous lust for power[1]).

The theme of the unhappiness of exile, on which Euripides dwells at some length (387ff.), perhaps because of its contemporary significance, is not expanded on by Seneca, but the Roman poet, like the Greek, makes Jocasta bewail Polyneices marriage into a 'foreign' family and to lament the fact that she was not able to play her role at the wedding ceremony (E. Ph. 337ff., Sen. Phoen. 505ff.). Polyneices' new awareness, as a result of his exile, of the significance of wealth is an important motive in both plays for his attempt to recover the kingship: in the Greek drama, Polyneices' statement of the power conferred by wealth (439ff.) follows the exchange between him and Jocasta about his bride (423ff.), and in the Senecan play the two themes are interwoven, as Polyneices claims that, being a poor exile, he is in a humiliating position in the household of his father-in-law (595ff.). In both plays Polyneices ends his speech with a sententia on the misery of being aristocratic but poor[2].

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[1] E. Ph. 524f. εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι / κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τἄλλα δ' εὐσεβεῖν χρεών.
Sen. Phoen. 664 Imperia pretio quolibet constant bene.

[2] E. Ph. 442 πένης γὰρ οὐδὲν εὐγενὴς ἀνήρ.
Sen. Phoen. 598 in seruitutem cadere de regno graue est.

In Euripides' Phoenissae, as Polyneices enters Thebes, he voices his fear of treachery on the part of Eteocles (261ff.), and with regard to Jocasta he says: πέποιθα μέντοι μητρί, κοὐ πέποιθ' ὅμως (272). In Sen. Phoen., too, Polyneices is portrayed as nervous (473f.), and Jocasta asks him directly: an timeo matris fidem? (477), to which Polyneices replies that he does indeed doubt her loyalty because the laws of nature seem to have lost their force (478f.). Polyneices' mistrust of Eteocles is perhaps a natural consequence of the situation and its manifestation in the Senecan play need not be the result of Euripidean influence; however, his lack of faith in his mother's loyalty is more striking and may well have its origin in the Greek drama.

Moricca found for nearly two dozen passages in Sen. Phoen. corresponding passages in Euripides' Phoenissae, which, he believed, reveal Seneca's dependence (in part, at least) on the Greek play[1], and the testimonia to the Euripidean drama, collected by Mastronarde and Bremer, include in addition several passages not mentioned by Moricca[2]. An examination of these passages reveals that, apart from the outline of the story, certain themes present in Euripides' play occur also in Sen, Phoen. Some of these have been mentioned above; in addition, one may note that both in Euripides' Phoenissae (571ff.) and in the Senecan play (565ff.) Jocasta asks Polyneices how he can bring himself to destroy his city, that in both plays Jocasta expresses a low opinion of the desirability of kingship (E. Ph. 549ff., Sen. Phoen. 645ff.), that Eteocles in the Roman, as in the Greek, drama ends the encounter with his brother by banishing him (E. Ph. 590ff., Sen. Phoen. 652f.). It is noteworthy, however, that not one of the passages cited from Sen. Phoen. is

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[1] RFIC 46 (1918), 6-14

[2] Mastronarde and Bremer, The Textual Tradition of Euripides' Phoinissai, 409 compares Sen. Phoen. 477 with E. Ph. 470-72 and Sen. Phoen. 392 with E. Ph. 266; on 418, Sen. Phoen. 573-76 and E. Ph. 564-65 are compared.

strongly reminiscent of the Euripidean play in terms of language or imagery.

If there were significant verbal parallels between Sen. Phoen. and Euripides' Phoenissae, one would have to conclude that Seneca borrowed directly from the Greek play. Since this is not the case, however, the nature of the influence of Euripides on Seneca is harder to assess. Certainly it is clear that Seneca did not slavishly follow Euripides' treatment of the legendary material, but, as has been seen, there are several notable similarities between the two dramas. Whether these imply a direct utilization by Seneca of material contained in the Greek drama is the question. The dramatists of Republican Rome are generally acknowledged to have modelled their tragedies closely on those of their Greek predecessors and it is possible that Seneca may have been influenced by Euripides only indirectly through an earlier Roman play. This is difficult to establish, given the fact that no Augustan drama on the same theme exists or is known ever to have existed. Of the works of the Republican dramatists, some interesting fragments of Accius' Phoenissae have survived[1]. Seneca's contempt for the tragedians of the Republican period[2] makes it unlikely that he would have been influenced by the earlier Roman poet directly, but the Augustan dramatists are believed to have used the works of their Roman predecessors, and it is possible that Euripidean elements in Seneca can be accounted for in this way.

A consideration of the fragments of Accius' Phoenissae may prove instructive. In that play, as in Euripides' Phoenissae, Oedipus is alive in Thebes during the battle between Eteocles and Polyneices, since he is not exiled until after their deaths and the suicide of Jocasta[3]. The motif of the curse of Oedipus

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[1] Julius Caesar is said by Suetonius (Caes. 56.7) to have written an Oedipus which Augustus refused to allow to be published and the surviving fragments of Accius' Antigone and Epigoni are not helpful for establishing a dependence, or lack thereof, of Seneca on Accius.

[2] See above Intro., 32, n.3.

[3] Ribbeck, Scaenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta I (Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta, frg. 12 refers to Oedipus' exile.

on his sons appears to be omitted from Accius' play; at least, it does not furnish the reason for the brothers' decision to rule alternately, which it does in the Euripidean drama (67-9), since in the version of Accius Oedipus himself institutes the sharing of the kingdom on his abdication[1]. This feature of the Republican drama may have a bearing on a puzzling aspect of Sen. Phoen., namely the fact that although Oedipus abdicates voluntarily and apparently without rancour, Eteocles and Polyneices agree to share the kingship (i.e. despite the fact that avoidance of their father's curse is not a motivating factor), whereas, under normal circumstances, the throne might be expected to pass automatically to the older son.[2] It may be that Seneca, like Accius, made Oedipus ordain the alternation of kingship; the fact that there is no reference to such an arrangement in the play as we have it does not preclude it, since Seneca may have intended a reference to it in a choral ode, a suitable place for the insertion of background material. If it were the case that the system of power-sharing had been established by Oedipus, Oedipus' indignation on his own behalf at 295 (Illis parentis ullus aut aequi est amor) would be far more meaningful. Certainly no reference to the agreement between the brothers to share the throne is couched in terms which would exclude this possibility.

Furthermore, the appeal of the Nuntius to Oedipus to intervene in the conflict points to his being regarded as having some authority over his sons; this would be compatible with a version in which he himself had arranged the nature of the succession which was at issue. However, even if Seneca did, like

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[1] Ribbeck[2] frg. 3 uicissitatemque imperitandi tradidit.

[2] In Apollod. 3.6.1, as in DS 4.65.1, there is no explicit connection made between Oedipus' curse and the decision of the brothers to share the throne, but in the former, Oedipus is said to have cursed the sons before they agreed to rule alternately, and in the latter mention is made of their ill-treatment of him which might have provoked his curse as in E. Ph. (these authors are believed to have depended heavily on the tragedians in their accounts of the Oedipus-story, see RE 34.2107.32ff.).

Accius, make Oedipus ordain the power-sharing, it does not prove that Seneca was in any way influenced by the earlier Roman dramatist, since the same element is found also in Hyginus Fab. 67[1] and in the writings of the Byzantine chronicler, Malalas[2], which suggests that it was a common variation in the treatment of the legend.

Ribbeck[3] believes that Accius' purpose in introducing this twist in the legend was to bring into conflict Eteocles' natural right to the throne as the first-born son with Oedipus' arrangement; he concludes that Eteocles would not have been portrayed as unfavourably by Accius as he is by Euripides (and Seneca), and suggests that Accius drew on an earlier version of the legend, namely that found in Aeschylus' Septem, in which Polyneices is appropriately characterised as 'the man of much strife' and Eteocles as 'the man of noble deeds'. This is possible, though highly speculative, since it cannot be substantiated from the extant fragments; if, however, Ribbeck's hypothesis is correct, it is clear that Accius' Phoenissae did not influence Seneca's portrayal of Eteocles.

As far as can be established from the surviving fragments of Accius' play, the general development of the plot followed that of Euripides Phoenissae closely[4]. In the final act of the Roman as of the Attic drama, Oedipus is

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[1] [Oedipus] ... regnumque filiis suis alternis annis tradidit, et a Thebis Antigone filia duce profugit.

[2] Quoted in Robert, Oidipus 2.168: [ὁ Οἰδίπους] ... ἐάσας τὸ βασίλειον τοῖς δυσὶν αὐτοῦ υἱοῖς, ἐνιαυτὸν βασιλεύειν κελεύσας.

[3] Ribbeck, Röm. Trag., 477

[4] Ibid., 480-82

banished by Creon[1] and one may assume that Antigone insists on accompanying her father into exile, as she does in the Greek play. The dependence of Seneca, whether direct or indirect, on the work of his Roman predecessor can, however, by no means be irrefutably established: as has been seen, it is possible that Seneca took over from Accius the notion of Oedipus' ordaining the power-sharing between the brothers, but the state of incompletion of Seneca's play does not permit us to be more definite than this.

The only feature in which the two plays agree, in opposition to Euripides' Phoenissae, is that in neither is the conflict of the brothers brought about by the curse of Oedipus whom they have imprisoned[2]. This, however, cannot be said to prove the influence of Accius on Seneca, since in Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus also Oedipus curses the brothers only after they have begun to quarrel over the throne. There are no close verbal echoes of Sen. Phoen. in Accius' play, although the opening verses of the latter are highly reminiscent of Euripides' Phoenissae[3]. As matters stand, then, it seems that both Accius and Seneca were influenced by Euripides, but, in view of the highly fragmentary nature of Accius' Phoenissae, it cannot be satisfactorily shown that the Euripidean elements in the Senecan drama reached it via Accius.

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[1] Ribbeck² frg. 12 iussit proficisci exilium quouis gentium/ ne scelere tuo Thebani uatescant agri.

[2] Ribbeck, Röm. Trag., 481f. must be correct in regarding frg. 9 (incusant ultro, a fortuna opibusque omnibus/ desertum abiectum afflictum exanimum expectorant) as referring to the exile of Oedipus rather than to his ill-treatment by his sons, since, as Mesk observes (WS 37 (1915), 304), the voluntary abdication and the absence of the curse as motivation for the fraternal conflict cannot be reconciled with the theme of the brothers' maltreatment of their father.

[3] See Ribbeck, ibid., 476.

Herington observes that Seneca's mode of composition in his prose works and his tragedies 'was ... that of free modelling in his own manner around some relatively simple armature provided by tradition, that he worked currente calamo with no other man's book open before him continually, but with a thousand literary memories swarming in his brain'[1]. This is borne out with regard to Phoen., which does not reveal a great dependence on any Greek or Roman drama, certainly not enough to justify the use of the word 'model' with reference to any one of its extant predecessors. The evidence suggests that Seneca knew the general outline of Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus and of Oedipus Tyrannus, but that he was more familiar with Euripides' Phoenissae. Returning to Tarrant's thesis, one may choose to believe that, had an Augustan tragedy entitled Phoenissae survived (and no such tragedy is known to have existed), it would have been clear that the Euripidean elements in Sen. Phoen. were drawn from the Roman drama and not directly from the Greek[2]. However, there seems to be no good reason to suppose that the existence of such a play would reveal that Sen. Phoen. was closely modelled on it: given Seneca's eclecticism with regard to such works of his dramatic predecessors as have survived[3], it seems clear that Seneca was not bound to any one particular version of the legendary material; it would therefore be perverse to refuse, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to ascribe to him the originality of a dramatic creation in which two strands of the legend are drawn together into a unique drama of counterpoise and contrast.

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[1] Phoenix 32 (1978), 274

[2] However, see Quint. Inst. 10.1.67-8 who asserts that of the three Attic tragedians iis qui se ad agendum comparant utiliorem longe fore Euripiden, because of his sententiae and his treatment of the emotions.

[3] See Robert, Oidipus, 1.491ff. for a survey of the numerous Greek playwrights, apart from the Attic triad, who are known to have written tragedies about Oedipus and the house of Thebes.

Non-dramatic influences

So determined were scholars of earlier years to see Seneca as a mere imitator of Greek tragedy that they looked no further than Attic drama for possible sources from which he might have drawn inspiration. Now that the theory of Senecan dependence on Greek drama has been called into question[1], one needs to consider more carefully the matter of sources and models[2]. The Oedipus legend was well-known, mothers taught it, probably in a variety of versions, to their children, who later would have learnt it at school, it would have been included in handbooks of mythology (like those of Diodorus, Apollodorus and Hyginus[3]) which have not survived and in works of art[4]. Thus Seneca would have grown up knowing about the Oedipus story, perhaps being familiar with more than one version of it. This folk-knowledge is lost to us, but it must be recognized that it would probably have been Seneca's primary source and may have been responsible for certain of what appear to be Senecan innovations in the treatment of the Theban legend: the designation of the weapon with which Laius was killed as a sword[5], the notion that Oedipus may at some point have had incestuous designs on Antigone[6], the idea of Jocasta's placing herself as a human buffer between her sons on the battlefield[7], the establishment of the length of Polyneices' exile at three years , the possible banishment of Jocasta by Eteocles at the end of the play . Seneca may well have invented

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[1]See Intro., 31ff.

[2]Cf. Vessey's comments on 'Quellenforschung' with regard to Statius (Statius and the Thebaid, 67-9).

[3]On the differences and similarities between the treatments by these authors of the Theban legend, see Robert, Oidipus 1.511ff.

[4]See Robert, ibid. passim for examples of artistic representations.

[5]See commentary on 106f.

[6]See commentary on 48 and 222f.

[7]505ff.

[8]See commentary on 370f.

[9]652f. and see note ad loc.

these details for himself, but it must be acknowledged that we cannot be sure, given that the oral tradition concerning, and contemporary versions of, the Theban legend, to which Seneca had access, are lost to us.

Moricca[1] believed that Seneca's intentions for the ending of Phoen. were influenced by Livy's account of the story of Coriolanus[2], who is persuaded by his mother Veturia not to attack Rome. The verbal correspondences adduced by Moricca between Veturia's harangue to Coriolanus (she is far fiercer than Seneca's Jocasta) and Jocasta's appeal to Polyneices are not striking[3], but it is true that the general situation is similar and certain ideas in Livy's account are found also in Seneca, which may point to the influence of the former on the latter[4].

Recently, Bremer et al. considered the effect [sic] on Sen. Phoen. of Stesichorus's fragmentary poem preserved in the 'Lille Papyrus'[5]. Stesichorus' poem contains the earliest extant version of a reconciliation scene between Jocasta and her sons[6], by which the equivalent scene in E. Ph.

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[1]RFIC 45 (1917), 491-93

[2]See Liv. 2.40.

[3]See Intro., 23.

[4]viz. the ambivalence felt by the mothers towards their sons who are also their enemies (Liv. 2.40.5; Sen. Phoen. 369f.); the thought, expressed in Liv. 2.40.8, that if Veturia had not had a son, there would be no war occurs in a slightly different form in Sen. Phoen. 523f., where Jocasta says: nempe si tu non fores,/bello carerem.

[5]Bremer, Kip, Slings, Some Recently Found Greek Poems, 170-72.

[6]It is not impossible that this scene was an innovation on the part of Stesichorus himself; see Bremer et al., ibid., 166f.

seems to have been influenced[1]. The similarities between the reconciliation scenes of Seneca and Stesichorus, are, however, not striking and the direct line of development from Stesichorus to Euripides to Seneca which Bremer et al., postulate[2] fails to take into account treatments of the legend a) between Stesichorus and Euripides, and b) between Euripides and Seneca, which have not survived and by which both dramatists may have been influenced.

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[1] Bremer, Kip, Slings, 169f.

[2] Ibid., 172 'The invention of the archaic Greek Poet, viz. a micro-economic solution from a domestic problem of inheritance, has - via the transmitter Euripides - inspired a Roman drama enveloping the whole οἰκουμένη.

4. PHILOSOPHY, RHETORIC AND POLITICS IN THE PHOENISSAE

Why did Seneca the philosopher write plays? This question has teased and teased again the minds of scholars, who often appear to believe in what Motto and Clark call 'a kind of unwritten "law of literary specialization"'[1], which prevents a philosopher from writing anything other than philosophy or a tragedian from applying his literary skills to any genre other than tragedy. This belief, coupled with a vague consciousness that all serious literature should have a moral purpose, and bolstered by Seneca's own statements concerning the efficacy and value of poetry as a vehicle for philosophical instruction[2], has led many scholars to declare in one way or another that Seneca's plays have as their purpose the teaching of philosophy. The extreme position of Berthe Marti[3] - that Senecan drama consists of a collection of Stoic propaganda-plays and that these plays, in the order in which they appear in E (beginning and ending with a Hercules play), form a philosophical whole and were conceived of by Seneca 'as a sort of glorified Essay on Man'[4] - has been generally rejected, but belief in the didactic purpose of Senecan drama is nonetheless widespread. One reads, for example, that in the tragedies the aim of Seneca 'war kein dichterischer, sondern ein pädagogischer'[5], that 'auch im tragischen Raum sollte die Philosophie den Primat besitzen'[6], that in his plays 'Seneca has, above all, a philosophic aim'[7], that 'Seneca uses the legends as parables to illustrate his theories of ethics and psychology[8],

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[1] ICS 7 (1982), 127

[2] See Ep 33.6; 108.9f., 24ff.

[3] TAPhA 76 (1945), 216-45

[4] Ibid., 222f.

[5] Birt, NJbb. 27 (1911), 336

[6] Paul, Eigenart von Senecas Phoenissen, 81

[7] Enk, Neophilologus 41 (1957), 302

[8] Scott-Kilvert, Arion 7 (1968), 502

that 'it is largely the tone of Stoic doctrine that gives to the plays a certain unity of atmosphere'[1], that the dramas reflect 'Seneca's overall purpose of dramatizing the traditional stories Neo-Stoically'[2].

There are two main difficulties with the contention that Seneca wrote tragedies to disseminate and popularize Stoicism through drama: one is the fact that, as Fantham has observed[3], although Seneca inspires admiration for the morally good characters, like Antigone in Phoen., there is a stronger fascination for the evil characters, like Atreus, Clytemnaestra and Medea; the other is the presence in the plays of elements and themes which are definitely un-Stoic - the ghosts, the underworld, the concept of hereditary evil, the atmosphere of disorder and hopelessness[4] with which some of the plays, most notably Oedip.[5] and Phaedr.[6], conclude. Stoic thought and maxims do occur in Senecan drama, but Senecan drama is not Stoic drama and Henry and Walker have warned against isolating Stoic statements in the plays and treating them as independent of their dramatic context; they observe that in two instances in

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[1] Mendell, Our Seneca, 153

[2] Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 132. For an account of the opinions of earlier scholars, see Dingel, Seneca und die Dichtung, 11-13; Dingel himself sees the tragedies as a negation of Seneca's philosophy (see esp. 72ff.).

[3] Sen. Troad., 18. See also Tarrant, Sen. Thyest., 23-5.

[4] Henry, D. & E., The Mask of Power, 176 observe: 'The Imperial tragedies offer no ... metaphysical comfort'.

[5] See Mastronarde, TAPhA 101 (1970), 309 esp. n.30; Henry & Walker, 'The Oedipus of Seneca: an Imperial Tragedy', 138 observe: 'Oedipus then offers nothing to set against desolation ....'

[6] Henry & Walker, G & R 13 (1966), 239: 'The theme of the Phaedra can be stated as "Chaos is come again" .... In the Phaedra the absence of consensus and unitas is expressed in poetical terms of personal disharmony, that of Phaedra, leading to her own disintegration and the spread of chaos outside.' For a somewhat different interpretation of the sense of chaos with which one is left at the end of the play, see the conclusion of Davis, 'Vindicat omnes natura sibi: a Reading of Seneca's Phaedra', 126.

Phaedr. where expressions of Stoic thought occur[1], the Stoic response is shown to be inadequate in the context of the drama[2]. Moreover, there is a tendency to label as 'Stoic', maxims and ideas to which the Stoics may have subscribed, but which are in fact philosophical or literary commonplaces[3]. For instance, the depiction of the struggle between reason and passion which is at the centre of most Senecan drama is commonly identified as a major Stoic element, but the same struggle fascinated Euripides and, as Tarrant observes[4], 'is a leading theme ... in the two greatest works of Augustan literature, the Aeneid and the Metamorphoses.' And the maxim that death is easy to find since many paths lead to it (Phoen. 151-53) would be acceptable to a Stoic and Seneca says similar things in his prose[5], but it is also a literary commonplace[6].

In the first section of Phoen. (1-362) the influence of Seneca's Stoicism is, however, apparent in the discussion about suicide which is the main theme of this part of the play: Antigone tries to dissuade Oedipus from suicide by urging the Stoic principle of detachment with regard to death (197f. nemo contempsit mori/ qui concupiuit); Oedipus reveals initially the libido moriendi condemned by Seneca the philosopher, but his subsequent yielding to

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[1] in the Nurse's utterance at 140f. (which is not exclusively Stoic, since the Peripatetics would also have agreed with it) and in Hippolytus' response to the Nurse at 483-85

[2] G & R 13 (1966), 224f.

[3] Tarrant (Sen. Thyest., 23) observes: 'Philosophical readings of the tragedies whatever their direction, have often been reductive, ... taking too little account of Seneca's exuberant philosophical eclecticism.' See Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 40ff. for numerous examples of philosophical commonplaces in the dramas.

[4] Op. cit., 23.

[5] See commentary on 151.

[6] See commentary on 151ff.

Antigone's wish that he remain alive conforms to the belief expressed elsewhere by Seneca that 'Sometimes even to live is to act bravely' (Ep. 78.2)[1]. The injunctions of Antigone to face misfortune with courage[2] conform to Stoic teaching and some scholars have gone so far as to regard her as an exemplum of Stoic virtue[3] which emerges triumphant from the battle beteween Reason and Passion as Oedipus capitulates in the face of her distress. However, to regard Antigone, and by extrapolation, Oedipus, purely as Stoic exempla would be to distort the nature of the work: Phoen. is a play, not a philosophical tract, and the characters are made to speak and act as they do to conform with the author's dramatic purpose. Stoic ideas lie behind the play[4], but these are subordinate to the dramatic concerns: Oedipus agrees to abandon his plan to commit suicide not to show the victory of Stoic reason over un-Stoic passion, but because he must be alive to reject the request of the Nuntius for his intervention between the brothers[5]. His rejection of the request and his persistence in his (un-Stoic) hatred of his sons is necessary because Seneca's purpose in the play is to set Oedipus' negative response to the blows dealt him by Fortune against the positive response of Jocasta. In the second part of Phoen. (363-664), Jocasta urges her sons to return to the path of virtue and expresses concern about the corrupting effect of kingship in the character (582ff), attitudes which the Stoics would have commended, but which do not make her, any more than Euripides' Jocasta who says much the same things, the mouthpiece for Stoic propaganda (see above).

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[1] See further commentary on 77ff.

[2] One might compare Antigone's role in Phoen. to that of Jocasta in Oedip., since both urge Oedipus, using Stoic arguments, to cope with adversity. On Jocasta in Oedip., see Owen, TAPhA 99 (1968), 311f.

[3] See Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 102f.; Herrmann, Le Théatre de Sénèque, 427f. considers Seneca's Antigone to be 'trop pleine de philosophie stoïcienne'. This view ignores certain un-Stoic aspects of Antigone's behaviour, notably her assertion that she will not ask Oedipus to abandon his anger (186f.) and possibly her excessive attachment - to the point of being willing to die with him - to him (61-79).

[4] See Paul, Eigenart von Senecas Phoenissen, 76ff.

[5] and also, ultimately, perhaps because the usual form of the legend (although we have no evidence for this in Seneca's time) demanded Oedipus' death at Colonus.

Senecan tragedy has frequently been disparaged as 'rhetorical drama', most notoriously by T.S. Eliot's dictum: 'In the plays of Seneca, the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it. His characters all seem to speak with the same voice, and at the top of it; they recite in turn'[1]. It is certainly true that the influence of Seneca's declamatory background[2] is strong, too strong at times for the good of the drama: static monologues of great length abound, dialogue is almost exclusively confined to point-scoring in stichomythic exchanges[3] and the self-conscious striving for effect of declamation, very apparent in the sententiae with which the plays abound[4] and in the purple passages of description[5], can give the impression of artificiality, of words for the sake of words only[6]. In Phoen. the influence of declamation is easily discernible: the first act (1-319), in which Antigone urges Oedipus not to commit suicide, is in essence a suasoria in dramatic form;[7] the sections of act four which depict Jocasta trying to dissuade

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[1] in Eliot's introduction to Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies Translated Into English (ed. T. Newton), ix

[2] On this, see Pratt, Seneca's Drama, chap. 5.

[3] Godley, 'Senecan Tragedy', 235 comments: 'It almost does not matter in the least who is taking part in the Senecan altercatio .... No matter who the personages are ... they all hurl epigrams at each other .... It is all very brilliant and showy; but the brilliance of electric light leaves one rather cold.'

[4] Costa, 'The Tragedies', 105 observes of these that 'Seneca seems to abandon the exploration of mankind's behaviour in favour of formulating its more unoriginal thoughts.'

[5] as, for instance, in Phoen. 124ff., 602ff.

[6] Costa (op. cit, 103) comments with regard to Troad. 642ff. that 'There is a cold intellectuality in Andromache's soliloquy which reflects the debating schools rather than the anguished decision she has to make.'

[7] as are the scenes between the protagonist and a nurse or attendant in other Senecan plays; see Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 151.

Polyneices from his intention to attack Thebes (esp. 525-85) are likewise reminiscent of a suasoria, while the situation portrayed in the second half of the play as a whole is as complex and paradoxical as that of any controuersia: Polyneices is both the victim of Eteocles' injustice and the hostis of Thebes, since in attempting to avenge the wrong done him by his brother he is committing a greater wrong; Jocasta urges Polyneices to desist from war, but recognizes that if he does so, he will be lost to her (520ff.); Polyneices, in trying to regain his right to the throne, is about to destroy the city he hopes to rule (557ff.)[1].

Many of the features of the plays identified by Canter as being declamatory[2] are present in Phoen.: sudden transitions or changes of mood[3], passages in which the emotions of a person seeing a vision is described[4], parts which contain entreaties, supplications or imprecations[5], adynata[6], ambiguous or enigmatic expressions in which the real meaning of the words must be conveyed by the speaker's tone of voice and the use of emphasis[7], monologues or virtual monologues within the play[8]. The desire of Seneca to make every word count,

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[1] Cf. Sen. Contr. 1.6 in which, like Jocasta in Phoen., a son finds himself in a difficult position because of his love for, and sense of loyalty to, each of two warring brothers; see Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 151.

[2] Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 55ff.

[3] See esp. Phoen. 49f., 140, 241, 306ff., 584f.

[4] as in Phoen. 39ff.

[5] See Phoen. 535-42.

[6] See Phoen. 85-9

[7] as in Phoen. 50 discede uirgo. timeo post matrem omnia and 241f. occidi patrem/sed matrem amaui.

[8] Oedipus' speeches are mostly virtual monologues - 'virtual' because technically they are part of the dialogue between him and Antigone.

to hold his audience's attention by his verbal tours de force is evidenced in Phoen., as in the other plays, not only by the numerous sententiae[1], but also by the vivid and usually gruesome detail with which scenes of violence are described[2], the fondness for rhetorical figures such as apostrophe[3], rhetorical questions[4], anaphora[5], paronomasia[6], chiasmus[7], parallelism of clause[8], asyndeton[9], metonomy[10] and others[11]. Nevertheless, the rhetorical flourishes, like the Stoic elements, are not an end in themselves, but are subordinated to Seneca's dramatic purpose: thus, Oedipus' emotional outbursts of longing for death in the first act (1-319) of the play are not simply displays of verbal pyrotechnics; rather they reveal a response to the threatening conflict of the brothers which is to be contrasted to the very different response of Jocasta.

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[1] Phoen. 98f., 100, 152f., 197f., 386, 598, 629, 654, 659, 660, 664

[2] as in Phoen. 159-65, 173-81. Bonner, Roman Declamation, 165 observes that this 'may perhaps be partly a Spanish characteristic, but probably owes something to the declaimers.' Certainly evidence of a similar dwelling on the details of acts of violence can be found in the writings of the Seneca the Elder; cf. Contr. 1.7.9; 2.5.4-6; 9.2.4; 10.4.2-3.

[3] See Phoen. 155, 178.

[4] The most striking instance in Phoen. occurs at 565-84 where there are no fewer than ten rhetorical questions in succession.

[5] e.g., sequor,sequor 40, non hunc .. non hunc 56-8, quid ... quid ... quid 234-36, iubente te ... iubente te 318f., hoc ... hoc 367f., ibo, ibo 12, 407.

[6] See uideo ... uideor 9, patris ... pater 55, salus ... saluum 89f., regna ... regnum 104, frater .. fratrem 355, petere ... petat 403, pectus ... pectori 470, ferrum ... ferri 483, fallere ... falli 493, vincere ... viceris 640, Cadmus ... Cadmi 647.

[7] The most striking examples occur at 77, 155, 216, 404.

[8] as at 76 si moreris, antecedo, si uiuis, sequor.

[9] See, e.g., 296, 304, 327, 340-46.

[10] as in manes for mors 235, arma for bellum 296, aera for tuba 389, sol for dies 516, thalamus for coniugium 515 and for coniunx 627.

[11] See Canter, Rhetorical Elements.

It has frequently been observed by critics of Seneca's plays that his dramatis personae, like the characters in declamation, tend to represent types rather than individuals[1]. Certainly in Phoen. one might with justification see Antigone as a stereotype of the devoted daughter and Eteocles as a stock tyrant[2], but they are not the main characters; these - Oedipus and Jocasta - could hardly be dsescribed as types, so unique is their situation[3] : the blind Oedipus, obsessed with guilt concerning his past crimes and revelling with perverse delight in the coming battle between his sons, could hardly be a stock figure and Jocasta's anxiety may be a conventional attribute of mothers, but it is heightened by extraordinary factors - like her consciousness of impiety's breeding impiety (367-69) and her awareness that the brothers' crime, being deliberate, will be more serious than that committed by Oedipus and herself (452-54) - which distinguish her from other worried mothers. They are not rounded characters - Seneca's focus is too narrow for that, since he is interested in them only in terms of their response to the fraternal conflict - but they are not stereotypes. Perhaps one of the reasons for the tendency to regard Senecan characters as types or as cardboard figures is to be found in Eliot's statement: 'His characters all seem to speak with the same voice, and at the top of it ....' The constant striving after verbal effects and clever arguments results in the portrayal of character's being relegated to a secondary position. Senecan characters tend to produce a cleverly-worded, persuasive and well-reasoned response in whatever situation

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[1]Thus, according to Bonner (Roman Declamation, 162) 'Lycus in the Hercules Furens is a stock tyrant, Hercules himself the stock "uir fortis"; Phaedra is the stock nouerca; Medea is certainly ferox inuictaque....'

[2]On the tyrants in Senecan drama, see Opelt, 'Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 274f.

[3]Mendell, Our Seneca, chap. X recognizes that the number of stock characters in Senecan drama is not nearly so great as it is commonly held to be.

they find themselves, irrespective of considerations of ἦθος : thus Antigone, can argue with the competence of a philosopher against her father's decision to commit suicide. It must be acknowledged, however, that although Senecan characters argue with uniform skill, the nature of their arguments can differ greatly: for instance, Antigone uses altruistic, moral arguments, Eteocles is entirely self-centered. There is also a sameness about the way in which characters express emotion irrespective of their age, sex, status and situation: for instance, Medea's anger against Jason and her desire to find a fitting punishment for him (Med. 893ff.) is expressed in terms very similar to Oedipus' out-pouring of self-loathing in Phoen.[1]

This sameness, however, need not imply that Eliot was correct in his verdict that 'the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it'. There is a reality behind Senecan tragedy, but not the dramatic reality sought by Eliot, nor yet - at least not exclusively - the philosophical reality discerned by Pratt. It has been observed that 'the prevalence of high pitch and violence in Senecan drama is completely consistent with the Stoic view that passion is rampant in nature and with the militant Stoic defense against adversity'[2]; this is so, but there is more to the atmosphere of destruction and the strong emotions than their acceptability in Stoic terms. The reality underlying these highly-charged and violent tragedies is social and political: Senecan drama can only be fully understood and appreciated as a product of its author and the times and circumstances in which he lived.

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[1] See Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 152.

[2] Pratt, TAPhA 79 (1948), 10

The details of Seneca's life are well known; it is sufficient to recall here that he nearly lost his life under Gaius, that he was recalled from exile in AD 49 by Agrippina and that he lived at the nerve-centre of the Roman world, the imperial court, first as Nero's tutor and later as his political adviser, for well over a decade, until in AD 62, threatened by enemies at court, he retired to the country where he committed suicide in AD 65, folloiwng his implication in the Pisonian conspiracy. To whichever period one dates the tragedies, it is clear that Seneca had ample opportunity to experience at close quarters the savagery, the capriciousness and the terror of uncertainty associated with imperial rule and resulting from imperial paranoia. Seneca's tragedies have been condemned as bombastic, exaggerated, melodramatic and violent. They are all these things, at least partly because Senecan drama mirrors through the traditional legends[1] the distorted lives and perverted values of those within the imperial circle. Both evil and good were monstrously magnified in Seneca's world under the strain imposed by fear and insecurity and thus, in the dramas too, characters tend to extremes, which contributes to the perception of them as less than real and as types rather than individuals.

The assimilation of the world of the tragedies to that of imperial Rome of the first century AD seems to be encouraged not only by the general similarity of ethos, but also by the presence in the dramas of words and phrases which are specifically Roman in their significance: in Phoen., for example, we find a reference to an aquila (390), to the swift arrows of the Parthians (428) and to a triumph (578). It is difficult to discern, however, whether such anachronisms were deliberately included by Seneca for this purpose and what effect their presence would have had on his contemporaries.[2]

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[1] Bonner, Roman Declamation, 162 observes that Seneca appears to have selected from the ranges of legendary material and tragic precedents those which contain 'the most sensational themes'; see also Henry, D.& E., The Mask of Power, 159f.

[2] On the whole subject, see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen.

The similarity of ethos between Seneca's real world and the fictional world of the tragedies does not mean the dramas are 'political essays'[1] or opposition literature tortuously written in political code[2]. To regard, for instance, Medea and Jason as glosses for Poppaea and Nero[3], the purpose of Oedip. as being to urge the assassination of Nero[4], the strife of the brothers in Phoen. as representing the conflict between Nero and Britannicus[5], Troad. as inspiring resistance to the destruction of the Augustan ordo (= Troy)[6] and every choral lyric as a coded attack on Nero[7], is pure fantasy, particularly considering the lack of firm evidence for the dating of the plays[8]. On this level, Phoen. 447 hunc petite uentrem, qui dedit fratres uiro (which should probably be deleted[9]) has been interpreted as an allusion to the murder of Agrippina, since it echoes the words ascribed to Agrippina by Tacitus and Dio[10]. In fact, the idea seems to be a rhetorical topos, which occurs elsewhere in Senecan drama as well as in the writings of the Elder Seneca[11].

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[1] So Steele, AJPh 43 (1922), 2

[2] So Bishop, Seneca's Daggered Stylus, 3

[3] Ibid., 131f.

[4] Ibid., 463

[5] Ibid., 465

[6] Ibid., 268f.

[7] According to Bishop, the political code is presented mainly in the odes since 'the acts must dilute such code because of the necessity of showing dramatic action', ibid., 48.

[8] See Intro., 74ff.

[9] See commentary ad loc.

[10] See Birt, NJbb. 27 (1911), 364; Steele, AJPh 43 (1922), 3f.; Calder, CJ 72 (1976), 5.

[11] See Oedip. 1038f.; Sen. Contr. 2.5.7.

There is, however, in the dramas a fascination with, and a pessimistic attitude toward, kingship and the corrupting effect of power, which must surely have its roots in Seneca's personal experience of the principate[1] and which suggest that the plays may have been written as safe expressions of Seneca's attitude to, and disillusionment with, the political life in which he was involved. Of all the rulers in the tragedies, Agamemnon in Troad. alone desires to exercise his authority with the moderation, justice, mercy and courage which Seneca recommends in the De Clementia[2], but Fate intervenes (349ff.) and Agamemnon is vanquished; for the rest the dramas portray the tyrannical abuse of power[3] and examine the dangers involved in kingship[4]. In Phoen. the exchange which concludes the extant portion of the play is entirely concerned with attitudes to power and the nature of kingly rule[5]: it has little dramatic significance - Eteocles' lust for power and lack of pietas have long since been revealed - but indicates Seneca's interest in the subject.

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[1]That Seneca identified, at least to some degree, the principate with kingship is borne out by Clem., in which rex is used of Nero, not directly, admittedly, but certainly by implication (1.8.1 and see Griffin, Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics, 141). Griffin (ibid., 143) suggests that Seneca used the word rex, which was still commonly regarded as a derogatory term in his time, because, influenced by Hellenistic treatises on kingship, 'he wished to apply to the princeps the conception of βασιλεύς as opposed to the τύραννος .' In the tragedies, of course, the rex (apart from Agamemnon in Troad.) is invariably a τύραννος in the Hellenistic sense'.

[2]See Henry, D. & E., The Mask of Power, 163.

[3]See Herc. Fur. 501ff.; Oedip. 518ff., 703f.; Agam. 270-73; Thyest. 205ff.; Phoen. 653ff. Opelt, 'Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 274f. identifies Lycus, Pyrrhus, Creon, Aegisthus, Oedipus, Atreus and Eteocles as representing different degrees of tyranny.

[4]See Oedip. 6ff., Troad. 1ff., Agam. 57ff.

[5]See commentary ad loc.

5. STAGING

General considerations

The notorious judgement pronounced in 1809 by August Wilhelm Schlegel on the tragedies of Seneca[1] first raised the question which, of all questions concerning Senecan drama, has provoked the greatest response from scholars, namely - did Seneca write his tragedies for stage performance or not? The principal proponent this century of the view that he did, was Léon Herrmann[2], the fullest and most cogent argument for the idea that he wrote for recitation has been put forward by Otto Zwierlein[3]. Since 1966, the year in which Zwierlein's book on the subject was published, debate has centered upon the arguments which he puts forward.

The case presented by Zwierlein is by no means completely convincing[4] and his ideas about what the Romans would have considered stageable are rather narrow. His conclusion, however, that Seneca's tragedies were Rezitationsdramen, has won some acceptance[5], although there are still those who support the notion that the plays were intended for production in the theatre and who point out

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[1] Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur, 27f. (the section of this work which deals with Senecan drama is reprinted in Lefèvre, E. (ed.), Senecas Tragödien, 13f.: '... sie sind über alle Beschreibung schwülstig und frostig, ohne Natur in Charakter und Handlung, durch die widersinnigsten Unschicklichkeiten empörend und so von aller theatralischen Einsicht entblösst, dass ich glaube, sie waren nie dazu bestimmt, aus den Schulen der Rhetoren auf die Bühne hervorzutreten'.

[2] in Le Théatre de Sénèque, 153-96. References to earlier work on the subject are to be found passim in the footnotes on these pages. For subsequent bibliography, see Sutton, Seneca on the Stage, 1 n.2.

[3] in Die Rezitationsdramen Senecas

[4] as was pointed out with vigour by Walker, reviewing Zwierlein's book in CPh 64 (1969), 183-87.

[5] See, e.g., Costa, Sen. Med. 5f.; Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 15-21; Hirschberg, Sen. Phoen., 1f.

the dramatic power of many scenes[1] in answer to the opponents of stage performance, who draw attention to their undramatic qualities, most notably their lack of internal cohesion - the independence of the individual scene has often been mentioned -, their rhetorical excesses, their lack of clear stage directions.

In recent years, the discussion has become more sophisticated. Fantham has pointed out that to classify Seneca's plays as Rezitationsdramen is not unproblematic: we know little about the way in which a recitatio was presented, but the evidence suggests that the author was the only reciter; if this was the case, the passages of stichomythia in Seneca's plays could hardly have been rendered effectively[2], and, at least in the case of Med. 170-71, in such a way as to make it clear to the audience who was speaking[3]. Even the notion of a concert reading, with several readers participating and one part being assigned to each, would not eliminate all the problems, since it raises some of the same difficulties which would be involved in a stage production[4].

There is no external evidence to suggest that Seneca's plays were performed in his lifetime. There is, however, an indication that, even in the Augustan period, tragedies were written without a view to performance on stage: the

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[1] Walker, CPh 64 (1969), 183-87; Zintzen, 'Alte Virtus Animosa Cadit', 175-76 n.84; Calder, CPh 70 (1975), 32-5; Fortey and Glucker, Latomus 34 (1975), 699-715; Tanner, 'Stoic Philosophy and Roman Tradition in Senecan Tragedy', 1101ff.

[2] Fantham, Sen. Troad., 46-8

[3] Herington, Arion 5 (1966), 445

[4] See Fantham, op. cit., 48. Beare, Hermathena 65 (1945), 15, who generally subscribes to the view of Seneca's plays as Rezitationsdramen, nevertheless recognizes some of the problems involved in this kind of presentation; he says, for example: 'I have some difficulty here with Agamemnon 108-124; the monologue represents Clytaemestra's thoughts, and at line 125 the Nurse asks her why she is brooding in silence. How did the reciter make this passage plausible?'

Thyestes of Varius was performed at the celebration of Octavian's victory at Actium[1] but, on the other hand, Ovid says nil equidem feci ... theatris (Trist. 5.7.27), which suggests that he did not think of his Medea as a stage play; in Trist. 2.553f., likewise, Ovid does not connect his play with the theatre, although Tarrant points out that here 'Ovid's apologetic purpose may well have determined his presentation of facts' since shortly before he described the Roman theatre as a hotbed of vice.[2] The plays of Pomponius Secundus, Seneca's contemporary, on the other hand, seem to have been presented first in the reciting hall and then on stage[3]. Maternus, in the time of Vespasian, is only recorded as having thought of presenting his plays as recitations, executed by himself[4], although he, like Pomponius, may have assumed that they would be performed on stage at a later date. It is thus clear that in the first century AD tragedies were both brought to the stage and presented as recitations and that the same play might be recited and acted in the theatre. As has been said, we have no external evidence to show that Seneca's plays were performed in the theatre; with regard to recitation, the only external evidence there is, is too slight to be conclusive[5].

It may be that, as Fantham suggests, Seneca expected the plays to be known in their entirety only through written copies (the fact that he was clearly writing for an educated audience which he expected to be familiar with the

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[1] Cod. Paris. 7530

[2] HSCPh 82 (1978), 260

[3] Plin. Ep. 7.17; Tac. Ann. 11.13

[4] Tac. Or. 2.1-3.3

[5] Quintilian's observation that he heard Seneca and Pomponius Secundus debating a point of tragic diction before a recitation (Inst. 8.3.31 nam memini iuuenis admodum inter Pomponium ac Senecam etiam praefationibus esse tractatum an 'gradus eliminat' in tragoediis dici oportuisset) may imply that Seneca was about to recite one of his tragedies (praefationes were the introductory observations of a playwright about to present a new work; see Zwierlein, Rezitationsdramen, 164-65) but equally, it could have been Pomponius' work that was about to be presented, or, in fact, a composition of a third party.

legendary background supports this view[1]), although extracts or individual scenes might be presented at a recitation or dramatized reading.[2]

The question, which, as has been said, has vexed scholars for nearly two centuries has concerned the method of presentation intended by Seneca when he wrote his plays. However, it has recently been observed by Hine that 'one must get away from intentionalist talk of writing "for the stage" or "for reading", because in all probability Seneca simply thought in terms of writing tragedies'.[3] And a tragedy was, by definition, a stage play. This does not mean that at all periods tragedies were presented on the stage or exclusively on the stage; recitation was clearly a popular alternative and was perhaps more popular than theatrical performance at certain times. If, then, Seneca's dramas are by definition stage plays, but stage plays were not always performed on the stage, the question that needs to be considered is how much Seneca knew about writing for the stage, a difficult question as we know little about staging conventions of the period.

Phoenissae

In a recent study of Seneca's dramatic technique[4], Sutton has shown that most of the practical difficulties traditionally associated with the stage production of Seneca's tragedies are reconcilable with what we know of the limitations and conventions of the Roman theatre. Regarding problems connected with the setting of certain plays, he does not accept the two

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[1] See note on 243ff.

[2] Sen. Troad., 48f. If Seneca had in mind the possibility that his plays might be recited piecemeal, it may explain, at least in part, the phenomenon much criticized by scholars, viz. the importance of the individual scene over the overall plan and development of the plot.

[3] JRS 77 (1987), 256-57

[4] Sutton, Seneca on the Stage

textually unmarked changes of scene alleged in Troad.[1], and the unquestionable scene change in Herc. Oet. he manages by imagining that, as in Aeschylus' Euminides, the scaenae frons would simply have been temporarily ignored[2]. Of the changes of setting demanded by Phoen. he says: '... it is not absolutely clear that one, let alone two changes of scene are implied by these disjecta membra of a tragedy, if indeed all these sketches represent a single play'[3]. He observes that 'a battlefield would be a very unusual setting for a classical tragedy' and, according to him, Seneca may have intended to locate the whole play in the woods near Cithaeron, bringing Eteocles and Polyneices to Jocasta instead of the other way round[4]. It is hard to see how such an intention can, however cautiously, be ascribed to Seneca on the basis of the text, which suggests nothing of the kind. The two scene changes in Phoen. are indeed a problem for those who would argue, as Sutton does, that Seneca's dramatic technique suggests that he composed his dramas with a view to stage performance. The first scene change could be accommodated fairly easily by using a backdrop of a rugged mountainside, which could be removed after 362. The second would be more tricky ('auf der antiken tragischen Bühne unmöglich', according to Zwierlein[5]), since Jocasta is imagined as being in the view of the Satelles and Antigone as she flees to the battlefield, which she reaches (433) before the act ends[6]. One might perhaps envisage a divided and split-level set, with the Satelles, Antigone and Jocasta standing on the

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[1] Seneca on the Stage, 9-11

[2] Seneca on the Stage, 14

[3] Ibid., 15f.

[4] Ibid., 15

[5] Rezitationsdramen, 34

[6] Tarrant (HSCPh 82 (1978), 252) observes: 'In this respect Seneca's dramatic technique seems unparalleled: no other "redefinition" of the scene in ancient drama, including early tragedy and Old Comedy, is quite so bold. The physical limitations of the ancient theatre seem completely left behind ...' He notes, however (252f.), that the accounts of offstage action earlier in the scene (394ff., 414ff.) are reminiscent of Plaut. Rud. 160ff. where Sceparnio describes the landing of the two girls, Palaestra and Ampelisca, as well as of the τεῖχοσκοπία in E. Ph. 101ff. and Danaus' report of the Egyptian landing in Aesch. Suppl. 713ff., and observes that in the passages from Greek tragedy 'a physical basis for the speaker's ability to see offstage is clearly established' (253) which is not the case in Sen. Phoen. or Plaut. Rud. See further commentary on 427ff.

roof of the stage house, which would represent the city walls, from 363-442 (or perhaps the Satelles would not enter until 387 or shortly before that point), when Jocasta would descend and move across the stage to the other side, which would be the battlefield. The problem with this notion is the presence of Eteocles and Polyneices - would they be present onstage throughout Jocasta's lament and the exchange between her, the Satelles and Antigone? If so, there would be five actors on stage at the same time, and although Seneca violates the three-actor rule (Hor. AP. 192 nec quarta loqui persona laboret) in other plays[1], he never uses more than four actors. If not, at what point would they enter? If one envisages an undivided stage for the third act, with the scaenae frons representing the city, one must imagine that Jocasta leaves the stage at 426 and that in 427ff. the Satelles describes to the audience her movements offstage. The Satelles and Antigone would have, however the act were staged, to make an uncued and abrupt exit at 442.

The fourth act could, like all Senecan drama, be presented on stage, but it does not reveal a theatrical consciousness, an awareness of the effects of stage performance. The act opens with Jocasta standing between her sons, challenging them and their respective forces to turn their weapons on her (443-48). Tension runs high as Jocasta pleads with the brothers to abandon their warlike intentions (449-59), finally concentrating her attention on the exile, Polyneices, with whom she is at last reunited (460-79). This is good, dramatic stuff. The silent presence of Eteocles, however, is not: Eteocles must presumably be imagined as being on stage throughout the fourth act since he is present both at the beginning and at the end of it[2], yet he says nothing until 651. This is dramatically awkward - is he to be thought of as standing still and watching the scene between Jocasta and Polyneices? - as well as

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[1]Though, according to Sutton's analysis, only in the second act of Oedip. and the final act of Agam. is a fourth actor required (Seneca on the Stage, 28ff.).

[2]On the allocation of 651b-64 see commentary ad loc.

implausible. The location by Seneca of the episode on the battlefield itself (as opposed, for instance, to the Euripidean version, where it takes place in the city) creates dramatic tension and a sense of urgency; yet, in this heightened atmosphere, Eteocles has no response to his mother's intervention, not even when she accuses him of being causa ... ferri ... prior (483), nor does he react to Polyneices' references to his faithlessness, perjury, deceit and crimes (588-90).[1]

It must be acknowledged, however, that in Phoen., as in the other plays of Seneca, there are points at which it would seem that the poet was visualizing the scenario: for instance, at 93f., with Mitte genitoris manum,/ animosa uirgo, we are presented with a picture of Antigone trying physically to restrain her father; at 306f., where Oedipus asks Antigone why she is weeping at his knees, Seneca must have had a mental image of the crying girl[2]; again, at 473f., quo uultus refers/acieque pauida fratris obseruas manum? suggests that Seneca had a visual conception of what he was describing (but cf. 467ff. and see commentary ad loc.). It is dramatically effective moments such as these in Senecan tragedy which may tempt one to conclude that Seneca wrote his

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[1] Other unnatural silences occur in the fourth act (861ff.) of Sen. Troad. where Polyxena, the central figure, does not speak and Andromache answers for her. Zwierlein, Rezitationsdramen, 45-7 ascribes this to Seneca's respect for the Horatian three-speaker rule, but cf. Fantham, Sen. Troad., 40, who points out that even if Seneca were concerned to abide by this rule, he could have left Andromache out of the scene, thus enabling Polyxena to speak for herself (as in E. Hec.), and in the third act (592ff.) of Sen. Herc. Fur. Megara is silent when Hercules returns from the underworld and it is Amphitryon who embraces and welcomes him (again Zwierlein, op. cit., 48, attempts to explain Megara's silence in terms of the three-actor rule, but cf. Fitch, Sen. Herc. Fur., 274 n.92, who observes that this could have been circumvented).

[2] Zwierlein (Rezitationsdramen, 62) observes that 306f., like 140f., suggests that Seneca did not have stage performance in mind: each of these passages, he claims, refers to an interjected plea by Antigone, yet no words are ascribed to Antigone in the text as one might expect in a drama. This may indicate that Seneca was not a very competent dramatist - although it is not necessary to assume that Seneca has carelessly omitted to make Antigone speak at these points (see commentary on 140ff., 307) - it need, however, imply nothing about his intentions regarding the presentation of his work.

plays with stage performance in mind. This need by no means be the case: these moments of effective drama reveal that Seneca was not so carried away by rhetoric that he did not, at least from time to time, think of his characters as flesh-and-blood people; in other words, they tell us something about Seneca's manner of composition, they do not tell us about his intentions with regard to the finished product.

Sutton, whose examination of Seneca's dramatic technique leads him to conclude that Seneca probably intended his plays to be performed on stage in a normal Roman theatre (as opposed to private domestic performance)[1], admits that the presence in Seneca's plays of 'implicit stage directions' such as cues could be explained in terms of Seneca's maintaining the fiction of writing for the stage. He rejects this explanation, however, on the grounds that the 'implicit stage directions' in his plays 'make good theatrical sense', which, he believes, they would not do if Seneca were only pretending to write plays for theatrical performance[2]. This seems questionable: why maintain a fiction at all if it is meaningless? The frequent omission of 'implicit stage directions' Sutton explains as resulting, not from the fact that Seneca was not writing for the stage, but from his ineptitude as a dramatist[3]. This ineptitude is so marked in Phoen. - in which, as Sutton observes[4], there are no entrance cues and only two exit cues (359ff., 427), Eteocles has to be identified by a process of elimination (the exile is Polyneices, therefore the other brother must be Eteocles), and the Satelles is never identified - that

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[1] Seneca on the Stage, 61

[2] Ibid., 58

[3] Ibid., 58f.

[4] Ibid., 56f.

Sutton is forced to conclude that 'Seneca would have paid more attention to dramaturgy, resolved evident problems regarding such issues as the setting of the play, and added more passages of a stage direction nature, at a later stage of composition'[1]. Sutton does not suggest how and where such passages might have been fitted into the text, and, given the fact that the four acts which are extant (on the structure of Phoen., see Intro., 5f.) do not show other signs of incompletion, it hardly seems reasonable to suppose that Seneca's regular method of composition involved returning to completed scenes to insert verses which would supply stage directions, whether implicit or explicit. The dearth of stage directions in Phoen., probably Seneca's last play[2], suggests only that Seneca lacked an understanding of the practicalities of stage performance.

If one favours recitation over stage performance as the more likely medium for the presentation of Seneca's tragedies, one has to contend with the fact that recitation also, particularly solo recitation, poses problems in some respects[3]. The use of the demonstrative pronouns in Phoen. 488, 495f. and 500 is one such instance, since Jocasta's avoidance of her sons' names would be confusing in a recitation: in 488, ille te, tu illum times?, it would not be immediately apparent to which brother ille referred and to which tu[4], unless the relevant character were indicated by a gesture in each case; in 495f. the same difficulty occurs with et hinc ... et illinc[5] (although perhaps it does not matter much, since we know that one is Eteocles and one is Polyneices); one

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[1] Seneca on the Stage., 57

[2] See Intro., 76f.

[3] See Intro., 64f.

[4] See on 488.

[5] See further on 495f.

can deduce that *hic* in 500 must refer to Eteocles[1], but a gesture would make it immediately obvious.

The stichomythic exchange between Jocasta and Eteocles would present difficulties for the solo reciter. Granted that he might be able to vary the pitch and tone of his voice so as to reflect the changes of speaker, he would not be able to make clear, as an actor could by gesturing or turning towards the relevant character, that *te* (652) referred to Polyneices rather than to Jocasta[2], to whom the first part of Eteocles' utterance (651b-652a) is addressed.

As Fantham has pointed out, the failure to identify characters would be an even greater problem in the reciting hall than on the stage, where costumes would help with identification to some extent. She concludes that the recitation of each act would have had to be preceded by an introduction in which the identity of the characters involved would have been stated[3]. This seems to be a reasonable possibility on the analogy of modern programme notes, although there is no external evidence to support it (not surprisingly, given the general paucity of evidence about dramatic productions); it does imply, however, that Seneca did not foresee the difficulties involved in the public presentation - whether on stage or in the reciting hall - of his tragedies.

The sum of the evidence suggests that although Seneca maintained some of the

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[1] See on 499.

[2] See commentary *ad loc*.

[3] *Sen. Troad.*, 46

conventions of the stage[1], his grasp of dramatic technique was far from secure. This may be because dramas were not regularly or exclusively performed on stage at this period and Seneca therefore lacked an awareness of the practical demands of writing for the theatre (as Godley put it, 'it is the consciousness of the stage that makes plays'[2]).

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[1]For the influence of post-Euripidean drama on Senecan dramatic technique, see Tarrant, HSCPh 82 (1987), 217f.

[2]Godley, 'Senecan Tragedy', 231

6. CHRONOLOGY[1]

Sen. Herc. Fur. must have been written before AD 54 since Apocol. contains a parody of it[2]. This is the only convincing date we have to go by in trying to establish a chronology for the plays of Seneca. The order in which the plays appear in the MSS is not helpful since they are arranged differently in the two main classes, the E and the A, and there is no external evidence which suggests that either arrangement reflects the order of composition[3].

Seneca makes no reference to the dramas in his prose works, although in Cons-Helu. 20.1 he says that during his exile he indulged, when he was not pondering the nature of man and of the universe, in leuiora studia[4], which may refer to the writing of tragedies (although it is vague enough to imply almost anything, from the reading of comedy to the writing of epigrams), but whether some or all of the tragedies, and, if any, which ones, were written in that period between late AD 41 and 49, is not known.

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[1]For a summary of scholarly opinion prior to 1924 concerning the dating of the dramas, see Herrmann, Le Théatre de Sénèque, 78f.

[2]See Weinrich, Senecas Apocolocyntosis, 75ff., 112ff; Fitch, Sen. Herc. Fur., 51-3. The mock-dirge in Apocol. 12.3 is reminiscent also of the lament of Hecuba and the Chorus in Troad. 63ff. (cf. esp. Troad. 93f. uacet ad crebri uerbera planctus/ furibunda manus and Apocol. 12.3.1 edite planctus; Troad. 131 fundite fletus and Apocol. 12.3.1 where the same expression occurs), which has caused some scholars to think that Troad. too may have been written before AD 54 (so Herzog, Rh. Mus. 77 (1928), 93; Zwierlein, Prolegomena, 197; but cf. Coffey, Lustrum 2 (1957), 150 who maintains - correctly - that the apparent verbal echoes of Troad. in Apocol. are not striking enough to be significant.). On the exact date of composition of Apocol., see Eden, Seneca: Apocolocyntosis, 4f., Griffin, Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics, 129 n.3.

[3]The order in which the dramas appear in E is: Herc. Fur., Troad., Phoen., Med., Phaedr., Oedip., Agam., Thyest., Herc. [Oet.]; in A they occur as follows: Herc. Fur., Thyest., Thebais [for Phoen; see Intro., 3f.], Hippolytus, Oedip., Troas, Med., Agam., Oct., Herc. Oet.

[4]animus omnis occupationis expers operibus suis uacat et modo se leuioribus studiis oblectat, modo ad considerandum suam universique naturam ueri auidus surgit.

some or all of the tragedies, and, if any, which ones, were written in that period between late AD 41 and 49, is not known.

Quintilian says that he remembers, when he was iuuenis admodum, hearing a discussion between Seneca and Pomponius Secundus about a point of tragic diction[1]. Quintilian is generally believed to have been born between AD 35 and 40 and admodum suggests that he was at the lower end of the iuuenis age-range (Tac. Or. 1.2 uses the phrase admodum iuuenis to describe himself when he was nineteen). As Pomponius was serving as governor of Germany in AD 50-51, the discussion could not have taken place before late AD 51. Pomponius was a recognized dramatist already in AD 47[2]; thus, it is possible to suppose that Seneca, if he was confident enough to argue with an established poet about a technical matter of tragic composition, had by this time gained a certain amount of experience in the genre (although his stature as a literary figure, established by his philosophical and oratorical works, might have given him the authority to air his views about tragedy even if he had written none himself). This would suggest that the leuiora studia enjoyed by Seneca in exile may have included the writing of tragic drama which was presented in Rome after his recall in AD 49. It does not necessarily imply that Seneca was actually engaged in dramatic composition in AD 51.

Tacitus relates that, when Seneca's enemies were undermining his position as Nero's adviser in AD 62, they claimed inter alia that he was writing more poetry (carmina) since he had found out that Nero liked it[3]. Carmina could refer to tragedy[4], in which case the snide comment - if it is true - may

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[1] nam memini iuuenis admodum inter Pomponium ac Senecam etiam praefatiionibus esse tractatum an "gradus eliminat" in tragoedia dici oportuisset (Inst. 8.3.31). See Zwierlein, Rezitationsdramen, 164-65 for a discussion of the passage.

[2] See Tac. Ann. 11.13 and RE 42.2358.

[3] Tac. Ann. 14.52.3 obiciebant ... carmina crebrius factitare, postquam Neroni amor eorum uenisset.

[4] In Ann. 11.13.1, Tacitus writes of Pomponius Secundus: is carmina scaenae dabat.

point to an intensified interest late in Seneca's life.

So far, then, the evidence suggests - no more than this - that Seneca wrote tragedies while he was in exile in the 40's AD and that he may have returned to that occupation in his later years, around the beginning of the 60's.

The influence of Senecan drama upon Lucan[1] has long been recognized[2]. Zwierlein notes especially the correspondences between the opening lines of Lucan's Bellum Ciuile and Sen.Phoen.: Luc. 1.5f. certatum .../in commune nefas recalls Phoen. 298 and 300 certant in omne facinus ... nefasque nullum per nefas nati putant; Luc. 1.6f. infestisque obuia signis/ signa reflects Phoen. 414f. signa collatis micant/ uicina signis[3]. Conte[4] observes in addition that Lucan's declaration that the clash between Pompey and Caesar resulted in bella .../plus quam ciuilia (1.3f.) was probably suggested to him by the fraternal strife in Sen. Phoen., with reference to which Oedipus says in 354f. non satis est adhuc/ciuile bellum. These correspondences may possibly be coincidental; however, the last parallel in particular seems to suggest Lucan's familiarity with Sen. Phoen. There is reason to believe that Phoen. was Seneca's last

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[1] and not vice versa; see Zwierlein, Prolegomena, 247 and Hosius (cited below).

[2] See Hosius, NJbb. 145 (1892), 337-56, Rh. Mus. 48 (1893), 380-97. For more recent discussions, see Zwierlein, Prolegomena, 246 n.200.

[3] Prolegomena, 247.

[4] Maia 18 (1966), 50

play[1]; if this is the case, it would appear that Seneca's tragedies had all Senecas tragedies had all been written before Lucan began his magnum opus, somewhere around AD 63[2]. The evidence of Tacitus (see above) would fit in with this, bearing in mind Seneca's undeniable ability to compose at speed (his output, considering the busyness of his life apart from his years in exile is phenomenal).

The historical approach, exemplified by Herzog, has frequently sought to assign fairly precise dates to the individual dramas by looking for allusions to contemporary events and by striving to correlate these with Seneca's personal career: thus, Herzog dates Thyest. to the beginning of Seneca's period in exile because the simple life is praised in contrast to the wickedness of the court[3], Med. is assigned to AD 45 or 46 principally because of an apparent reference in 364ff. to Claudius' British expedition[4], Phaedr. to around AD 48 on the basis of 981ff. in which Herzog sees a reference to C. Silius' consulship (AD 48) and his adultery with Messalina[5], Oedip. and Agam. to the period between Ad 59 and 62: Oedip. to AD 60 or 61 since the exchange between Creon and Oedipus (659ff.) points to a date before Seneca's retirement from the court of Nero but after the writing of Tranq. (at which stage Seneca

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[1] This is supported by Fitch's statistics (see Intro., 79); also perhaps by its state of incompletion: if Seneca's motive, or one of them, in writing the plays was to give voice in a safe way to his feelings about the corruption of the principate (see Intro., 62), if, in fact, they served a therapeutic purpose, it is plausible that once Seneca had withdrawn from public life in AD 62 he had no reason to continue writing plays, and thus Phoen., which he had begun, was left unfinished. Cf. Nisbet, 'The Oak and the Axe', 249-51, who defends the authenticity of Herc. Oet. and dates it to shortly before Seneca's death in AD 65; this, he claims, 'would explain the anomalies, the verbosity, the othr signs of haste'. For a recent treatment of the stronger case against the Herc. Oet.'s authenticity, see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 313ff.

[2] So Ahl, Lucan, 41f., 352f. The chronology of Lucan's writing is not undisputed, however; cf. Rose, TAPhA 97 (1966), 379-96, who argues that Pharsalia was composed in AD 64 and 65.

[3] Herzog, Rh. Mus. 77 (1928), 71ff.

[4] Ibid., 87

[5] Ibid., 90ff.

had not yet adopted the ideal of otium)[1], and Agam. to a slightly later date mainly because of the pessimism of the first choral ode (57ff.)[2]. Herzog assigns Phoen. to Seneca's last years, the portrait of Eteocles as the archetypal tyrant being identifiable with Nero at his despotic worst[3]. Fantham, although displaying a general scepticism about Herzog's approach, nevertheless accepts a terminus post quem of AD 47 for Troad. because of the allusion to the lusus Troiae, which she (following Herzog[4]) believes to have been inspired by Nero's involvement in the traditional ceremony at the secular games in that year[5]. None of this is conclusive evidence, especially since, as Coffey observes with reference to Herzog's conclusions about the date of Med., it is a fallacy to assume that an allusion to a contemporary event must have been made immediately after the occurrence of the event[6].

In an attempt to determine the order of composition of the tragedies some scholars have concentrated on an examination of various forms of internal evidence: verse technique, verbal echoes, word order, the development of common motifs, phrasing and so on. This has in general produced results that are, at best, inconclusive although plausible, and at worst, so conflicting as

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[1] Rh. Mus. 77 (1928), 94ff.

[2] Ibid., 98

[3] Ibid., 103f.

[4] Rh. Mus. 77 (1928), 93

[5] Fantham, Sen. Troad., 13

[6] Lustrum 2 (1957), 150

to be worthless[1]. The study by Fitch[2], however, stands out, although in the absence of unambiguous external evidence, no attempt to establish a relative chronology on the basis of internal evidence is likely to win universal and unqualified acceptance. Fitch argues that a high incidence of sense-pauses occurring within the line (rather than at the end of it) indicates a poet's confidence in handling the metre; thus, the early plays would exhibit fewer mid-line sense-pauses, later plays more. This is true of the plays of Sophocles (so far as we know) and Shakespeare, and when the test is applied to Seneca, the plays fall into three groups: I. Agam. (32.4%[3]), Phaedr. (34.4%), Oedip. (36.8%); II. Med. (47.2%), Troad. (47.6%), Herc. Fur. (49%); III. Thyest. (54.5%), Phoen. (57.2%). Fitch applies another test which corroborates these groupings: the incidence of the shortening of final -o in certain categories of words, an increasing tendency among poets during the first century AD, is significantly higher in Thyest. and Phoen. than in the other plays, and Phoen. exhibits a frequency of this licence that is so much greater than that of Thyest. that it suggests that Phoen. was the last of Seneca's dramas. The fact that Oedip. and Agam. are the only plays which contain polymetric choruses is explicable in terms of Fitch's groupings as an early experiment in ambitious metrical schemes, which Seneca later abandoned. The feature of dramatic technique whereby the chorus at the end of an ode,

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[1]Zwierlein (Prolegomena, 233ff.) examines the rate of occurrence in the plays of various features of versification without striking results. He also considers the frequency of the inversion of particles, a device, which, he says, serves a a metrical stop-gap and might thus be expected to occur more seldom in the later plays as Seneca's ability to manipulate the metre improved. The highest incidence of the inversion of particles occurs in Troad. and Herc. Fur., while Phoen. exhibits almost no instances of the device (ibid., 236).

[2]AJPh 102 (1981), 289-307

[3]I.e. 32.4% of all the sense-pauses occurring in the passages of dialogue occur in the middle of the line.

makes a reference to something occurring on stage, as a transition to the next act, occurs for certain nine times in the Senecan corpus; these are not scattered throughout the plays - eight appear in Agam., Phaedr. and Oedip., which suggests that this device was largely abandoned by Seneca after the writing of his early dramas[1].

Fitch concludes his study with the observation that the extent of the development of Seneca's technical skill and versatility implied by the pause-test suggests that the dramas were written over a considerable period of time[2]. This is plausible. Moreover, it accords well with the little external evidence at our disposal, since the remark of Quintilian and the evidence of Tacitus suggest that the composition of tragic drama was a pastime in which Seneca indulged, or to which he returned sporadically, over more than a decade, until, in fact, his withdrawal from Nero's court in AD 62, after which his time seem seems to have been devoted to serious writing, viz. the Epistulae Morales, the Naturales Quaestiones and possibly the Moralis Philosophia which has not survived.

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[1] That Oedip. precedes Phoen. has been argued on other grounds also: Leo (Obs. Crit., 77) observed that Phoen. 176ff. refer back to the specific treatment by Seneca in Oedip. of the self-blinding; Zwierlein compares with this passage in Phoen., Oedip. 952, 958 and 961. He observes, further, that nec ista morte contentus fui (Phoen. 169) can only properly be understood in the context of Oedip. 949ff., where Oedipus expresses the desire for a prolonged death, dragged out in the no-man's-land between the dead and the living (Prolegomena, 239). These arguments are compelling. Cf. Herrmann, Le Théâtre de Sénèque, 100 who claims, unconvincingly that Phoen., antedates Oedip. 'dont les couleurs sont plus chargées.'

[2] AJPh 102 (1981), 307

COMMENTARY

1ff. Neither Oedipus nor Antigone (nor any other character in the play) is identified by name on first entrance (see Sutton, Seneca on the Stage, 57), but the opening verses (1-2) give clear pointers as to who they are: the mention of a blind father whose sole support is his daughter could only apply to Oedipus and Antigone. Any lingering doubts as to the identity of the first speaker, Oedipus, would certainly be dispelled by line 33, by which point mention has been made of the blind man's sense of pollution (infaustum 3, nefandi 7, noxae nostrae 9) and of the fact that he should have died on Cithaeron as a boy (31-3). One may note that Hippolytus in the prologue of Phaedr. is likewise not explicitly identified, although the tone and content of his speech would make his identity clear. On the prologue nature of this act, see Intro., 28f. The main theme of this first act (1-319; on the division into acts, see Intro., 5f.) is suicide, on which Oedipus is determined and from which Antigone, with eventual and unexpected success (see commentary on 319), tries to dissuade him. The debate between father and daughter is static and declamatory, but Seneca succeeds in infusing it with dramatic interest through his gradual introduction of the second theme of the play (which dominates from 363 onward) - the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices. At first, it is not clear why Oedipus has been plunged again, after some time, into the anguished guilt and despair which gripped him when he first became aware of his true identity; thus the very intensity of his furor generates dramatic suspense as we wait to discover its cause. Seneca exploits this suspense to its fullest, initially merely mentioning the quarrel of the brothers without associating it with Oedipus' death wish (53ff.), then alluding to it briefly once more,

this time in the context of Oedipus' desire for death, but again without making the connection explicit (108-10), finally giving the power struggle between the brothers as the cause of Oedipus' impulse to suicide only at 273ff. (see further commentary ad loc.).

In the first speech of Oedipus, his desire for death is introduced almost immediately (4-7). From the passive surrender to his fate expressed in 11, patere caecum qua uolet ferri pedem, Oedipus moves suddenly in 12 to a frenzied desire to seek death actively. The abrupt shift in mood and tone, a feature of the declamatory style which pervades the tragedies (see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 55f.), is heralded by ibo, ibo (the immediate repetition of a verb occurs frequently in Senecan drama; see also Phoen. 40 sequor, sequor and 407 ibo, ibo and see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 156f. for examples in the other dramas). The impression of Oedipus' eagerness to rush to his death is reinforced by words denoting speed and action: celer 13, egit 17, cucurrit 19, fugas 21, fugiens 23, insiluit 24.

12-26 are carefully constructed: the tricolon qua ... qua ... qua (12,13,15) is followed by two exempla introduced by uel qua (19, 22), each containing an internal qua clause (20, 23). The piling-up of examples, a device dear to Seneca (for other instances in the tragedies, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements 75f.), which here serves to place Oedipus' furor in the context of the violent history of the house of Thebes, culminates in the outburst: felices quibus/fortuna melior tam bonas matres dedit (25f.), which provides a smooth transition to the next section of the speech, in which Oedipus agonizes over his having survived beyond infancy and over his crimes against his parents. His consideration of these leads him to the awareness that there is yet a crime, a most

characteristic crime, he can commit against his daughter (see on 48) and at this climactic point, the speech ends.

1. caeci parentis

Cf. S.OC. 1 τέκνον τυφλοῦ γέροντος. Oedipus' blindness, a recurrent motif which is variously exploited in this first fragment (1-319) of Phoen. (see, e.g., 170, where Seneca, with grim wit, represents Oedipus' blindness as the first instalment in a limb-by-limb death), is alluded to several times in the opening lines of the play: caeci 1, errantem gradum 4, non uideo 9, caecum ... pedem 11. Its function here is to help to create a vivid initial picture of the broken and blinded state (see also fessi) of the once heroic Oedipus.

This is the first of many references by Oedipus to himself as a father (see also patrem 3, patre 49, genitoris 93, patris 95, patrem 98, patrem 121, parens 135, pater 230, parentis 295, patris 301, patre 333, patrem 336). The obsessive insistence on his paternity by Oedipus suggests unresolved guilt resulting from his incest.

regimen

The only other instance in the tragedies of regimen used personally occurs at Sen. Agam. 705. Tarrant ad loc. notes the following parallels: Liv. 4.31.5; Val. Max. 1.1.9; see also Stat.Theb. 4.536 o nostrae regimen uiresque senectae. Regimen is more commonly used of the management or control of public or private affairs: its use here, in the first verse of the play, may be intended as a subtle reminder of the changed position of the former rerum Thebanarum

regimen.

1f. **fessi unicum/patris leuamen**

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1250-51 unicum lapsae domus firmamen; Med. 945-46 unicum afflictae domus/solamen; Troad. 703-4 unicum adflictae mihi/solamen; Phaedr. 267 solamen annis unicum fessis; Agam. 910 paternae mortis auxilium unicum. Unicum not only contributes to the general pathos of the situation (see on 1), but it has implications for Seneca's treatment of the traditional legend: as well as pointing to the traditional lack of concern of Oedipus' sons, it suggests that Ismene is to be excluded from Seneca's drama (see also on 81, 211). The interlocked arrangement of the two noun-epithet pairs (fessi patris and unicum leuamen) is very common in Senecan drama: Canter (Rhetorical Elements, 174) estimates its average occurrence as being once in every thirty lines; in Phoen., see, e.g. 9, 58, 123, 209, 326.

2. **patris leuamen**

Patris has MS consensus. Gronovius' conjecture, lateris, offered without explanation, has been widely accepted. The objection to patris would appear to be the tedious, unemphatic repetition (cf. 267-68, where such repetition is emphatic) which results with parentis 1 and patrem 3. It might also be argued that parentis ... patris is ambiguous and could suggest that two different people are being referred to. However, lateris is not unproblematic either: firstly, lateris in this context would seem to be an example of synecdoche, but latus, unlike caput, is nowhere else used in this way (although, admittedly, the use of pars pro toto was very

widespread and could probably easily be extended); secondly, the specificity of lateris, when coupled with fessi, seems to demand that leuamen be translated as 'support' in the literal and physical, rather than in the spiritual, sense (although it is a Senecan tendency to mix physical images, like lateris here, with abstract ones, like leuamen; on this see Tarrant, Sen. Thyest., 26f.), but such a use of leuamen is not attested elsewhere (in the three other instances of leuamen in Senecan drama - Troad. 961, Med. 548, Agam. 491 - it has the sense of 'comfort').

Bothe's conjecture, fratris, has not found favour with modern editors. It has in its favour the fact that it would be stressing the (unnatural) relationship that exists between Antigone and Oedipus in a play which revolves around confused family relationships, and that the corruption of fratris to patris, especially in view of the proximity of parentis and patrem, would have been easy. However, fratris must be rejected as a possible reading because, quite simply, it is un-Senecan in its total lack of subtlety. Seneca is capable of slick, exaggerated cleverness, but he is never as crudely obvious as this; cf. 49f. where Oedipus merely hints at the possibility of his turning his incestuous gaze from his mother to his daughter.

In the final analysis it seems best to retain patris, albeit with serious reservations. Despite the arguments against patris, the MS reading, it does make sense and furthermore, neither of the possible alternatives is without problems at least as serious, if not more so, than those with which patris is beset.

nata

Oedipus addresses Antigone as nata five times during the play. This instance may be compared with 229 where, as here, nata occurs in close proximity to pater (patrem) in order, it would seem, to highlight a context in which Oedipus' incestuous activities are mentioned.

Phoen. is the only Senecan drama in which no character addresses another by name at any point. Furthermore, only once does a character refer to another by name (in 554 Jocasta mentions Oedipus by name). Oedipus, however, refers to himself three times by name (89, 178, 313; see commentary ad loc.).

There are various instances in Senecan drama (as also in Greek tragedy) of a character's deliberate avoidance of a proper name: in Sen. Agam., for example, Clytemnaestra appears deliberately to avoid using Agamemnon's name as being painful or distasteful to her, while Costa on Sen. Med. 218ff. notes that Medea cannot bring herself to use Jason's name when speaking of him to Creon (who is part of the new family that has taken Jason from her) and he observes that in E. Med. Jason and Medea avoid using each other's names when speaking together.

In Sen. Phoen. the absence of proper names has a different significance: it is not the avoidance of the names but rather the terms which Seneca uses in their place which are noteworthy. Characters constantly both address and refer to one another in terms which indicate their consanguineity and words indicating family relationships occur more frequently in Phoen. than in any other Senecan tragedy: a family term (viz. nata, natus, parens, genitor, mater, maternus, pater, paternus, frater, fraternus, soror, filia (filius does not occur), coniunx, uxor) occurs on average once in every 4.5 lines of Phoen., whereas the next most

frequent occurrence is once in every 10.5 lines in [Sen.] Herc. Oet., as also in Sen. Med., 10.6 in Troad., 10.7 in Thyest. and less frequently in the remaining plays (see **Appendix 1** for detailed distribution of family terms). The strikingly high incidence of these terms in Phoen. is clearly not simply due to the subject matter: Thyest., for example, is also very much concerned with the family, but it does not exhibit the same abundance of family terms. In Phoen., words denoting family relationships are used as a rhetorical device to sustain the leitmotiv of the genetic chaos which reigns in the Theban royal house.

One can compare Cic. Clu. 12, where Cicero says of Sassia, Cluentius' evil mother: mater enim a me in omni causa, tametsi in hunc [sc. Cluentium] hostili odio et crudelitate est, mater, inquam, appellabitur .... Sassia's crime was an unnatural one for a mother and Cicero stresses this by repeatedly referring to her as mater. In Ov. Met. 10.467f., with reference to the affair between Myrrha and her father, Onyras, we read: 'filia' dixit,/dixit et illa 'pater', sceleri ne nomina desint. In App. Met. 10.3, on the other hand, we find an avoidance of the family term, which is as marked as is its deliberate use in Sen. Phoen., and Cic. Clu.: of the stepmother in love with her stepson Apuleius says ... ad se uocari praecipit filium - quod nomen in eo, si posset, ne ruboris admoneretur, libenter eraderet, and he subsequently refers to the stepson only as adulescens and as iuuenis.

2f. quam tanti est mihi/genuisse

Cf. Phoen. 651-52 est tanti mihi/cum regibus iacere.

uel sic

A cryptic phrase; perhaps Oedipus means that he is happy to have produced a daughter like Antigone, wretched though he is in other respects, or possibly uel sic is intended to allude to the manner of Antigone's begetting, i.e. even though she was born of an incestuous union, he is happy to have her. For the use of uel with adverbs, see OLD uel 5b and c.

3. **infaustum**

Neither in Sen. Oedip. nor in Sen. Phoen. is there a direct reference to the ancestral curse to which Oedipus falls victum (cf. A. Th. 742ff.; S.OC. 962ff.; E.Ph. 17ff.). In Oedip., the chorus sings in general terms of the ueteres deum irae which harass the house of Labdacus (709ff.), but in Phoen. there is not even that - perhaps because of the absence of choral odes, for which such material would be well-suited. Early in both plays, however, infaustus is used to describe Oedipus (see Oedip. 80). The word has a range of meaning which extends from 'unlucky' (as in Verg. Aen. 5.635; Tac. Ann. 2.41) through 'ill-omened' in a general sense (as in Sil. 9.164; Stat. Silu. 2.1.120) to the very specific 'cursed by the gods' (as in Sen. Herc. Fur. 1135; Tac. Ann. 1.30). Both here, and more particularly in Oedip. 80, Seneca may be exploiting the different levels of meaning of the epithet, to cover the misery of Oedipus' physical circumstances, his lack of favour with the gods as a result of his crimes, and his labouring under the hereditary curse on his family. Cf. nefandi 7.

4. **in recta quid deflectis errantem gradum**

Cf. Sen. Phaedr. 136f. ... durus et ueri insolens/ad recta flecti regius nolit tumor.

errantem gradum

Errantem, in a context where Oedipus' physical weakness is given prominence, must refer specifically to his stumbling gait rather than, in general terms, to his wandering in exile.

On the expression, see Hirschberg ad loc.

5. **permitte labi; melius inueniam uiam**

On permitto + infinitive, common from Livy onward, see K-S 2.230; L-H-S 2.345. For the expression, cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 33 permitte tantum, genitor: inueniam uiam, Sen. Herc. Fur. 1245 mortis inueniam uiam. This is an inversion of the stage convention whereby a blind man asks his guide to lead him where he wants to go; cf. E. Ph. 834ff.; S.OT. 444, OC. 21.

On the centrality of the image of the road in the first act of Phoen., see Henry, D. & E., The Mask of Power, 148 who observe that Oedipus is portrayed as 'shunning the paths to life, seeking ways to death', while all the time he is stumbling along through the wild countryside.

6. **quam quaero solus quae me ab hac uita extrahat**

Solus is held back and used to separate the two adjectival clauses, both of which qualify uiam. This has the dual effect of throwing solus into relief and of delaying the second clause, which contains

the main idea, Oedipus' desire for death.

7. **nefandi capitis**

The synecdoche, caput (cf. Gk. κεφαλή and κάρα) occurs most commonly in Senecan drama with various execratory adjectives (see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 123 for further examples) although it may also express affection and respect (so Herc. Fur. 1334, Phaedr. 677, Oedip. 291). See Fitch on Herc. Fur. 920.

8. **caelum atque terras**

The association or polarisation of caelum and terrae to indicate limitlessness or totality is proverbial; see Otto, Sprichwörter, caelum 1 and Nachträge, 263. Courtney on Juv. 2.25 notes in addition Sil. 13.586-87.

quantulum hac egi manu!

Diminutives are rare in Senecan drama; paruulus, which occurs six times (Oedip. 463, 806, Thyest. 144, Herc. Fur. 1020, Troad. 456, 1089), and quantulum, which occurs only here, are the only examples. Quantulum is rare in poetry in general (but see Hor. Sat. 2.3.124); however, it is found frequently in Seneca's prose works, both in adjectival form, and, as it is used here, as a neuter singular used as a substantive; see, e.g., Ben. 7.24.1, Clem. 1.5.2.

Quantulum hac egi manu should be punctuated as an exclamation rather than as a question (pace Leo and Peiper-Richter); on this see Housman, Classical Papers 3.1083.

9f. non uideo noxae conscium nostrae diem,/sed uideor

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 1001 conscium euasi diem. Oedipus' sense of the inadequacy of his act of self-mutilation as a means of isolating himself is expressed also at 224ff., where he laments the fact that he can still hear. In non uideo ... diem Seneca may be adopting the notion, common in Greek thought, that the polluted are unfit to look on the sun, the source of purity (on this, see Elliot on E. Med. 1321 and 1327); cf. S.OT. 1424ff. where Creon is unwilling for Oedipus to remain for long in the sight of the sun. Alternatively, this may be a more general reminder of Oedipus' sightlessness and pollution; diem being a contrast to the noctem of his blindness (see Sen. Oedip. 977 where Oedipus, having gouged out his eyes, says inuenta thalamis digna nox tandem meis) and of his moral uncleanness; on physical and moral light or darkness in 21Seneca, see Herington, Arion 5 (1966), 433.

video ... videor

For paronomasia of this kind, involving the change of voice of a verb, see also Phoen. 493 fallere ... falli, 640f. uincere ... uiceris; for examples in the other dramas, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 162. Costa on Sen. Med. 218ff. observes that this device is 'a stylistic feature of the exercises in the rhetorical schools' and refers to Bonner, Roman Declamation, 70, 167. For examples in Seneca's prose works, see Hine on Sen. QN. 2.1.1 (p.130). For examples in other authors, see Fordyce on Catull. 45.20.

9. noxae

Cf. Liv. 3.67.1 mihi nullius noxae conscius ... sum.

11. **caecum ... pedem**

Cf. S.OC. 182-83 ἔπε' ὦδ' ἁμαυ-/ρῷ κώλῳ, πάτερ, ἕ σ' ἄγω;
E. Ph. 1539-40 βακτρεύμασι τυφλοῦ/ποδὸς.

13. **meus Cithaeron**

Cf. S.OT. 1451f.

13ff. For the association of the deaths of Actaeon and Pentheus on Cithaeron, cf. E. Ba. 1291f.

14f. **suis/noua praeda canibus**

Cf. Ov. Trist. 2.106 [Actaeon]praeda fuit canibus ... suis; Manil. 5.183 [Actaeon] canibus noua praeda fuit; Jakobi (Der Einfluss Ovids, 42) notes in addition Verg. Aen. 9.485f. where the reference is not to Actaeon, but iacere appears: heu, terra ignota canibus data praeda Latinis/alitibusque iaces. Nova, as commonly, = 'strange' (see Jakobi, ibid., on the sense of nova in the Manilius passage).

15f. **per obscurum nemus/siluamque opacae uallis**

For the association of nemus and silua, cf. Cic. Div. 1.114 multos nemora siluaeque, multos amnes aut maria commouent; Verg. Aen. 6.703-4 uidet Aeneas ... /seclusum nemus et uirgulta sonantia siluae. A nemus, a grove or wood, is more limited in size than a silua. Silua can be synonomous with nemus (see L&S), but its meaning can be extended to include a large forest with shrubs, foliage and undergrowth. Here, as in the other examples cited, Seneca moves in his description from the specific and the limited (nemus) to the more general (silua). On the nature of the terrain, see Dodds on E. Ba.

32f., 1051f.

obscurum ... opacae

The repetition is probably intended to create a sinister atmosphere. Opaca is a conventional epithet of vales; cf. Hor. Ep. 1.16.5f.; Ov. Met. 11.277; Val. Fl. 2.538.

17. **sorores**

Agaue's sisters, Ino and Semele, took part in the dismembering of Pentheus (E. Ba. 1129f.; Ov. Met. 3.719ff.). Perhaps though, Seneca is using sorores in the sense of 'sisters in crime', with reference to the whole crowd of Bacchanals, as in Ov. Met. 3.713f. adeste sorores ... /ruit omnis in unum turba furens. Cf. Sen. Oedip. 616f. furibunda Agaue, tota quam sequitur manus/partita regem.

sorores mater

Antithesis created by the juxtaposition of family terms is not uncommon in Senecan drama; cf. Troad. 1074 paterna puero, Phaedr. 555 gnati parens, Oedip. 253 soror fratri (see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 152f. for further examples).

gaudens malo

For the thought cf. E. Ba. 1144 θήρα δυσπότμῳ χαιρομένη . For the expression gaudens malo, see Plaut. Stich. 394; Ter. Andr. 627; Cic. Tusc. 3.19; Ov. Met. 8.126, Trist. 2.569f.

18. **uibrante fixum praetulit thyrso caput**

Cf. E. Ba. 1139-42 κρᾶτα /.../ πήξασ' ἐπ' ἄκρον θύρσον.../ φέρει. For the combination of uibrare and thyrsus (cf. Gk. θυρσοπνάκτης), see also Sen. Herc. Fur. 474, Oedip. 441, 628. The impaling of Pentheus' head on a thyrsus is a detail apparently introduced by Seneca; see Hirschberg ad loc.

19ff. Antiope, daughter of Nycteus, fled from her home when Zeus tried to seduce her. She married Epopeus of Sicyon and bore twin sons, Amphion and Zethus. Before Nycteus committed suicide, he ordered his brother Lycus to punish Antiope. Lycus killed Epopeus and captured Antiope, whom he, and particularly his jealous wife Dirce, tormented. Antiope eventually escaped, found her sons and they avenged themselves on Dirce.

The lost Antiope of Euripides was the main source for subsequent versions of the legend. Seneca was clearly familiar, if not directly with E. Ant. or with Pacuvius' Antiope, which, according to Hyginus (Fab. 8), was closely modelled on the Euripidean play (on Hyginus' confusion of Ennius and Pacuvius, see Rose, Hyg. Fab., 10 and Ribbeck, Röm. Trag., 281f.), with a contemporary version, no doubt influenced by the Greek dramatist's work. According to Hyginus, in E. Ant., as in the parallel version found in Apollod. 3.5.5, Dirce is punished by being tied to a bull and being dragged to death. The action of the Euripidean play takes place at Eleutherae on Cithaeron; both Vergil (Ecl. 2.23f.) and Propertius (3.15.41f.), however, associate Dirce with Aracynthus, not the more famous Aracynthus of Acarnania (Plin. HN. 4.6), but apparently a mountain between Boeotia and Attica (see Steph. Byz. Ἀράκυνθος ; Schol. ad Stat. Theb. 2.239; RE 3.377, 46ff.) perhaps part of the

Cithaeron range (so Richardson on Prop. 3.15.42; Coleman on Verg. Ecl. 2.24).

19. **corpus inuisum**

Leo (followed by Peiper-Richter and Herrmann) emended the reading of the MSS, inuisum, to inlisum, citing in support of the emendation Phoen. 96 (where inuisum occurs) and Phaedr. 1093 (where inlisum occurs in a very similar context to Phoen. 19). The only problem with inuisum here would seem to be that, since no indirect object is expressed, it is not clear to whom Dirce's body was hateful. The syntax suggests that it was hateful to the bull - as an unfamiliar burden, perhaps - but the implication of the legend is that the body was inuisum primarily to Antiope's sons. In any event, the ambiguity does not pose a serious difficulty, and given the fact of the MS consensus on inuisum, it should not be emended.

20. **horrentes rubos**

Cf. Verg. Georg. 3.315 horrentesque rubos.

21. **tauri ferocis sanguis ostentat fugas**

Tauri ferocis depends on fugas and not on sanguis, since it is Dirce's blood, and not the bull's that is leaving the gory trail.

On separated genitives, see L-H-S 2.692 where the closest parallel cited would seem to be Liv. 30.3.3. castra in conspectu Hasdrubalis erant (where the genitive depends on castra rather than conspectu as its position suggests). On similar kinds of hyperbaton, see further Housman on Manil. 5.568, Classical Papers 2.640-41; Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od. 1.35.6.

22f. uel qua alta maria uertice immenso premit/Inoa rupes

Seneca seems to have had in mind Ovid's description of the Inoa rupes in Met. 4.525f.: imminet aequoribus scopulus: pars ima cauatur/fluctibus. Premo here = 'tower above', 'overhang'; so Sen. Thyest. 642f. latus [sc. domus] / aequale monti crescit atque urbem premit; Stat. Theb. 5.154 insuper ingens mons premit.

23. nouum

Suum has MS consensus, but Peiper's nouum, has been widely accepted. It is an attractive possibility for various reasons: 1) because it balances nouumque and Seneca is fond of anastrophe (cf., e.g., Phoen. 450f. dexteras matri date,/ date dum piae sunt, Oedip. 644f. pronubam thalami traham,/traham sonantis uerbera and see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 159); 2) because of the parallel it creates with Oedipus' own situation: he too fled a nouum scelus (the murder of his father) to commit another nouum scelus (marriage with his mother); 3) because it brings the version of the legend followed by Seneca into line with that found in Ov. Met. 4.416ff. (the first nouum refers to the murder by Athamas, Ino's husband, of their elder son, Learchus, the second to Ino's murder of their second son, Melicertes; see Zwierlein, (Gnomon 38 (1966), 683), appropriately, since Seneca follows Ovid closely in the whole passage (13ff.).

Gronovius' conjecture, uiri, also fits in with Ovid's version of the legend, but it is paleographically difficult and lacks the appeal of nouum. Suum has little to recommend it. It neither balances nor contrasts with nouumque, and it demands an obscure version of the legend found in Hyginus (Fab. 2) and referred to by Pausanias 1.44.7 and Apollodorus 1.9.1, in which Ino plots to kill

Phrixus, the son of Athamas by a former wife. She fails, and, fleeing the wrath of Athamas, hurls herself into the sea with Melicertes.

Inoa rupes

Pausanias 1.44.7 identifies this as the Molourian rock, situated on the road from Megara to Corinth. This road ran along the southern shore of Megarian territory (see Fraser on Paus. 1.44.6), and the Molourian rock, according to Pausanias, was to be found before the boundary separating Megara from Corinth (Paus. 1.44.10). If Pausanias can be relied upon, Seneca is stretching the tradition somewhat by associating the Inoa rupes with Cithaeron itself, although the extension of the Cithaeron range did run southwards into Corinth and thence from west to east across Megaris, and the section of the road on which Pausanias locates the Inoa rupes ran through these mountains.

25. **mersura natum seque**

Mergo not infrequently has the sense of 'drown' and mersura natum is thus not unusual (TLL 8.832.3ff.); mersura se, however, is the only instance in classical Latin of mergo used reflexively with this sense (TLL 8.832.61)

felices quibus

Sc. sunt; the ellipsis is standard in exclamations introduced by felix; cf. Ov. Met. 10.329, Am. 2.5.9; Stat. Theb. 10.615.

25f. felices quibus/fortuna melior tam bonas matres dedit

Tam bonas matres refers to Ino and Agaue. Oedipus paradoxically calls them bonae matres since the death that they inflicted on their respective sons is his dearest wish.

27f. est alius istis .../cursu

On the location of 1-362, see Intro., 7n.1.

27. noster ... locus

Cf. sedes meas 30, hospitium ... meum 31f. The notion of a special place for Oedipus may have its source in S.OC. 84ff. In this play, it foreshadows Oedipus' apotheosis, the acknowledgement by the gods of his heroic endurance. The place which calls to Seneca's Oedipus however, is associated with no divine raising-up of an heroic sufferer; Seneca's Oedipus has not risen above his suffering or come to terms with his guilt, and his appointed place does not mark the end of a long struggle against adversity. The special place of the Sophoclean Oedipus is in Athens, far away from Thebes, with which his misery is associated; the place which calls to the Senecan Oedipus, however, is on Cithaeron, where his troubles began. Sophocles' Oedipus has struggled and won; Seneca's Oedipus has not begun to accept his misfortunes.

28. cursu incito

Cf. 393 cursu citato.

29. **non haesitabit gressus**

Cf. 4 errantem gradum. Oedipus' gait is uncertain when he is being led along the right path by Antigone, but paradoxically, it will not falter when he goes to his death in the appointed place.

Cf. S.OC. 1542f. where Oedipus declares that he will find his own way to the place where he is to die and see Wurnig, Gefühlsdarstellungen in den Tragödien Senecas, 83f.

29f. **huc omni duce/spoliatus ibo**

Cf. S.OC., where Oedipus' determination to go to his death alone is mentioned several times (1520f., 1541ff., 1588f).

30. **quid moror sedes meas?**

On punctuation, see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 116.

Cf. S.OC. 1627f., where the god calls to Oedipus: ὦ οὗτος οὗτος, Οἰδίπους, τί μέλλομεν/χωρεῖν. Here, as frequently in Senecan drama (see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 142), the rhetorical question is used by the speaker to goad himself into action. The use of moror here is unique: moror is not infrequently used of inanimate objects, but it always has the sense of 'delay', and never, as here, 'keep waiting' (TLL 8.1498.78ff.).

30ff. For the desire of Seneca's Oedipus to return to Cithaeron to die as he should have done as a child, cf. S.OT. 1391ff., 1451ff. Leo (Obs. Crit., 77) suggests that Seneca may have been thinking of E. Ph. 1752 when he wrote these verses, and Cima (RFIC 32 (1904), 258, who maintains that all the scenes of Sen. Phoen. were derived from

E. Ph., believes that the inspiration for the first scene could have come from E. Ph. 327ff. However, as Mesk (WS 37 (1915), 307) correctly points out, the resemblance between Sen. Phoen. 30ff. and the passages cited by Leo and Cima is by no means as strong as that between Phoen. 30ff. and S. OT. 1451ff. On Seneca's familiarity with the Sophoclean play, see Intro., 36f.

31. **mortem**

On the superiority of mortem (E) over montem (A), see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 116.

31ff. Oedipus' appeal to Cithaeron exhibits certain characteristics of traditional prayer form: invocation of the deity (see Appel, De Romanorum Precibus, 75f. on the importance of the name); the list of requests to be granted - redde 31 ...restitue 32 ... recipe 33 ... perage 36 (cf., e.g., Verg, Aen. 3.85ff., 5.689ff.); the use of semper followed by characteristics of the deity invoked (cf., e.g., Cic. Dom. 144 ... et te, custos urbis, Minerua, quae semper adiutrix consiliorum meorum, testis laborum exstitisti ... and see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od 2.8.15) - this usually follows the invocation and does not, as here, occur in the middle of the request: alliteration - semper ... saeue, cruente ... crudelis 34, mandatum ... matris 36f.,, perage ... patris 36, animus ... antiqua 37 (see Appel, De Romanorum Precibus, 160f.). The substance of Oedipus' supplication, however, - that Cithaeron will give him death - is an inversion of the usual kind of prayer, in which a deity is asked either to grant something positive (e.g. prosperity, health) or to avert an evil (e.g. war, famine), and the epithets.

used of Cithaeron are the antithesis of the flattering kind of epithet that the Romans used of a deity being invoked (see Appel, De Romanorum Precibus, 94ff.). Seneca here appears to manipulate a traditional form in order to impress powerfully upon his audience the bizarre paradox of Oedipus' situation. The emphatic position of mortem reinforces this.

hospitium

The significance of hospitium lies in the sense of transience which it conveys. Like a lodger at a guest-house, Oedipus plans to linger only temporarily on Cithaeron, but unlike the lodger, who leaves the guest-house to continue his journey, Oedipus' stay on Cithaeron will be temporary because he intends to die there.

32. **senex**

The only other reference in Sen. Phoen. to Oedipus' age is at 350. Cf. S.OC. where the fact of Oedipus' advanced years is stressed, being mentioned by Oedipus himself (1, 395, 870, 961), by the chorus (125, 177, 209, 292, 305) and by each of the other characters. In the Sophoclean play, Oedipus' age is further emphasised by the insistence on his physical weakness (see, e.g. 9ff., 20, 148, 201, 496, 1109). This portrayal of Oedipus has the dramatic function of preparing the audience for his imminent death and of contrasting his physical frailty with his near-daemonic stature at the end of the play.

In Sen. Phoen., Oedipus does not seem to be particularly old and frail: fessi (1) could refer to his mental, as much as to his physical, state and there is no other suggestion of his having been

enfeebled by age. As a Roman senex Oedipus need not be more than forty, although Duckworth (Roman Comedy, 89f.) points out that the comic senex is definitely an old man (and in Senecan tragedy cf., e.g., Teiresias in Oedipus, Amphitryon in Hercules Furens). In Sen. Phoen., for the dramatic situation to be at all plausible, Oedipus cannot be too old, since his mother, who must be at least fifteen years older than he, is still alive and vigorous. To suggest, however, that Seneca was concerned about such details, is probably to impute too much realism to him.

33. **ubi debui infans**

Nicely ambiguous: it is not clear whether Oedipus himself feels that he ought to have died on Cithaeron as a child (because in this way his crimes as an adult would not have occurred), or whether debui refers to the fact that he was destined by his parents to die but escaped by luck.

supplicium uetus

Cf. antiqua ... supplicia (37f.). A supplicium presupposes a scelus and Oedipus had comitted no crime when he was left to die on Cithaeron as an infant. An explanation of this conceit is provided by 251-53, where Oedipus describes himself as having been made sceleris infandi [i.e. the murder of his father] reum by Apollo even before he was born, and as having been condemned to death in consequence. Oedipus infans had done nothing to warrant death, but his parricide having been divinely ordained and being therefore immutable, Oedipus senex regards himself as having been guilty of the crime even in utero. Thus his death as a child would have been

a supplicium for the crime which he would inevitably commit in the future.

34. **cruente**

= 'bloodthirsty' rather than 'bloodstained'; so Sen. Contr. 1.7.13 descripsit mores hominis impii, cruenti; Luc. 4.822 Mariusque ferox et Cinna cruentus. Cithaeron could, of course, be described as 'bloodstained' in view of the deaths which have taken place on it (12ff.), but the other epithets in the verse, saeue crudelis ferox, imply an active savagery, with which 'bloodthirsty' accords better. For four adjectives in asyndeton, see 223 and note.

35. **cum occidis et cum parcis**

Cf. Sen. Med. 432 cum saeuit et cum parcit, where the power over life and death, which is here ascribed to Cithaeron, is attributed to fate. Occidis presumably refers to Actaeon, Pentheus, Dirce and Ino, while parcis refers to Oedipus himself. For Oedipus, paradoxically, it was as cruel to be spared as it was for the others to die (cf. 97ff. where the same idea is made explicit).

36. **cadauer**

Seneca may here be trying to convey either or both of two ideas: firstly, that Oedipus, who did not die in infancy as his father intended sees himself as having been a cadauer in terms of his father's mandatum since that time, and secondly, that, as a result of his self-blinding, Oedipus regards himself as little more than a cadauer (cf. Sen. Contr. 7.4.9, where the expression uiua cadauera

is used of two men who have lost their eyes and their hands respectively). The image of Oedipus as a living corpse recurs at 94f., 98f.; cf. Sen. Oedip. 949-51. Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 724 observes that cadauer is a more emotive word than corpus since it conveys more strongly the physical realities of death.

36f. **perage mandatum patris,/iam et matris**

Cf. S.OT. 1452f. ... Κιθαιρὼν ... ὃν μήτηρ τε μοι/πατὴρ τ'ἐθέσθην ζῶντε κύριον ταφον. Elsewhere Sophocles makes Laius alone responsible for the exposure of Oedipus on Cithaeron (OT. 717ff.; cf. E.Ph. 1600f.), but in 1452f., Oedipus, overwhelmed by the recent discovery of his crimes against both of his parents, thinks of both Laius and Jocasta as having decreed his death. Seneca's Oedipus, likewise oppressed by guilt, also associates his death with a past mandatum of both his parents; cf. 253, where Laius alone is held responsible for the sentence of death on Oedipus. Sophocles uses a simple τέ to link μήτηρ and πατήρ ; Seneca, however, uses iam et which suggests that he is implying a special sense of mandatum when it is associated with Jocasta. Mandatum patris clearly refers to the uetus supplicium owed by Oedipus, and there is no version of the legend in which Jocasta joins with Laius in decreeing the exposure of Oedipus on Cithaeron, perhaps because the oracle which predicts Laius' death at the hands of his son says nothing of the crime which Oedipus will commit against his mother (Robert, Oidipus, 68). Nevertheless, Oedipus does commit incest with Jocasta, and for this reason he regards her as joining Laius in demanding supplicium from him, albeit not the uetus supplicium payable for the parricide. As Farnaby put it: Olim quidem patris de parricido admoniti oraculo, sed et iam matris, quae mihi necem

imprecatur propter incestum.

For the expression perage mandatum, see also Sen. Phaedr. 592.

37f. animus gestit antiqua exsequi/supplicia

This sentence forms a bridge between Oedipus' supplication of Cithaeron and his turning back to Antigone and his immediate situation (see Hansen, Die Stellung der Affektrede, 72).

tenes ... tenes

Cf. Verg. Aen. 6.51f. 'cessas in uota precesque,/Tros' ait 'Aenea?' 'cessas?'

38f. pestifero amore

Pestifero here is no more than hyperbole for odioso; cf. 220 where pestiferus has the sense of 'contaminating'. The oxymoron suggests the paradox of Oedipus' situation: one would not usually regard filial devotion as abhorrent, but to Oedipus, who is not a normal parent, and who wants to die because of that fact, the love that motivates Antigone to restrain him from suicide is pestiferus. Billerbeck (Senecas Tragödien, 40f. para. 77) observes that Seneca shares Ovid's fondness for compound adjectives in -fer, as do Lucan, Statius and Silius. The formation of adjectives in this way, says Billerbeck, manifests itself even in early Latin poetry. For other compound adjectives in Phoen., see on 132 luctifica, 223 incestificus, 472 belligeri.

40. **sequor, sequor**

Cf. 12 ibo, ibo.

iam parce

This, like sequor, sequor, must be addressed to Laius rather than to Antigone, to whom Oedipus turns with sanguineum gerens .... For the expression, see also Sen. Herc. Fur. 1015, 1314, Med. 1004; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 982.

40f. **sanguineum gerens/insigne regni ... rapti**

It is not clear what precisely Seneca intends us to understand by insigne. Insigne is usually found in the plural when it is used to indicate the general trappings of office; e.g. Cic. Sest. 57; Verg. Aen. 8.506. In the singular it usually refers to a specific mark of distinction, such as a crown (Vell. 2.56.4), a device emblazoned on a shield (Verg. Aen. 7.657) or a victor's garland (Sen. Agam. 936). In this context insigne is probably intended to suggest a particular piece of royal paraphernalia such as a crown or a sceptre.

Dingel (Seneca und die Dichtung, 81f.) suggests that the dramatic purpose of Laius' apparition may be to prepare for a further horror in the house of Thebes - the battle between the brothers, and he observes that the above words 'als Omen auf den blutigen Machtkampf ... deuten lassen' (82). Admittedly, regni ... rapti here is echoed by rapto ... regno in 57, but although this may be a conscious attempt on the part of Seneca to forge a verbal link between Oedipus' crime and that of Eteocles, it seems fanciful to see the apparition itself as a foreshadowing device. (On the

dramatic significance of Laius' appearance, see on 43f.)

42f. inanes .../uultus

Inanes refers to Oedipus' empty eye-sockets; cf. Sen Oedip. 968f. lacerat ./.. inanes sinus; Val. Fl. 4.435 oculos ... inanes; Stat. Theb. 10.697 uultus inanis exstinctique orbes; Seneca possibly uses the plural for the singular because both eye-sockets are empty.

The image of Laius attacking Oedipus' already sightless eyes symbolises Oedipus' sense that he has to inflict upon himself a more drastic punishment than he has already done.

43f. nata, genitorem uides?/ego uideo. Tandem ...

A gives 44 to Antigone, which cannot be correct, as modern editors have generally realized. Firstly, an interjection in the middle of a declamatory outburst would be extraordinarily clumsy; secondly, if the words tandem spiritum inimicum expue are ascribed to Antigone, they make little sense in the context; thirdly, and most importantly, the whole point of the question nata, genitorem uides? and the emphatic (and paradoxical) assertion ego uideo is to indicate to the audience that Oedipus sees Laius but that Antigone does not. One must presumably imagine a pause after nata, genitorem uides? for Antigone's negative response, indicated perhaps - since she does not speak - by a gesture. Clearly Laius here is no more than a figment of Oedipus' sick imagination, and his introduction is intended to suggest the extreme guilt of Oedipus. Seneca's tragic characters are not infrequently represented as seeing visions when they are in the grip of strong

emotion; e.g. Andromache thinks that she sees Hector's angry ghost coming to help her when the Greeks are about to dismantle his tomb in their search for Astyanax (Troad. 683-86), and before Medea kills her sons she seems to see the Furies pursuing her in vengeance for her murder of her brother (Med. 958ff.). One may note also a declamatory parallel in Quint. Decl. 314.20ff. (ed. Winterbottom), where a man accused of parricide is portrayed as being haunted by the bloody vision of his murdered father.

44. tandem spiritum inimicum expue

Cf. Sen. Thyest. 245 Ferro peremptus spiritum inimicum expuat, Ira 3.43.4 iam istam spiritum expuimus.

44ff. On the combination of hesitation with self-encouragement (see also 91ff.), see Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 1281-84.

45. desertor anime

A reads anime, E has animae. Gronovius emended to animi. On the superiority of anime, see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 116.

Oedipus is the only character in Phoen. to address himself (see also 178). As elsewhere in Senecan drama, the device indicates internal dissent or turmoil (cf. Clytemnaestra's self-addresses in Agam. 108f., 192ff. and those of Medea in Med. 40 ff., 397f., 562ff., 895ff., 937, 976, 986ff.). See Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 283-84, Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 1283f.

On the adjectival use of desertor, see Hirschberg ad loc.

46. poenas languidas longae morae

On the superiority of this, the reading of the MSS, as against the emendation of Grotius, poenae languidas longae moras, see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 116f., who observes that the noun-epithet combination of longa mora occurs also at Sen. Agam. 54 and 426.

47. mortem totam recipe

A has recipe, E has recipe admitte. Leo, who favoured E as far as possible, emended to admitte. There has, however, clearly been interpolation in E, though it has not expelled the original reading, and since the reading common to A and E is recipe, it is reasonable to suppose that this is correct. For the expression mortem recipere in Senecan drama, see also Sen. Troad. 1156. The interpolation of admitte could have occurred for the sake of the paronomasia in omitte ... admitte. See Zwierlein's note, Krit. Komm., 117.

47f. quid segnis traho/quod uiuo

The MS reading is quid segnis traho?/quid uiuo. Gronovius conjectured quod uiuo although he retained quid uiuo in his text. He explained quod uiuo as follows: hoc est, quam partem aut illud quatenus uiuo. Quid parte mei praemortua, reliquam partem uiuam segnis traho? and cited in support of his conjecture Phoen. 113f. et in cinerem dabo/hoc quidquid in me uiuit and 170f. nec me redemi parte:membratim tibi/ perire uolui. The difficulty with the reading of the MSS is the sense of traho which it demands, viz. 'I drag out my life'. Such a sense of traho is not attested elsewhere, although the verb is occasionally used intransitively (so, e.g., Sen. Ben. 7.13; Tac. Hist. 4.58). A translation which reflects the limiting sense of quod uiuo would be, 'Why do I

sluggishly drag out what is still alive in me?', quod being an adverbial accusative (thus quod uiuo literally = 'with respect to which I live'). For this use of quod, cf. Ter. Phorm. 361 nam iam adulescenti nihil est quod succenseam; Sen. Ep. 49.3 punctum est quod uiuimus et adhuc puncto minus.

48. **nullum facere iam possum scelus?**

The sense of this sentence in its context depends on its punctuation. If one takes it as a question, as do most modern editors, Oedipus is apparently asking whether he is safe from the possibility of committing further crimes. The progression of Oedipus' thinking would then be as follows: 'Why should I live on? Am I immune to the danger of committing a further crime? No, I am not: if I could commit incest with my mother, I have to worry about my daughter too.' The implication of Oedipus' conclusion in this case is that he must die, not only to pay the supplicium owed to his parents, but also to ensure that he does not turn to Antigone with incestuous intent.

If one takes the sentence as a statement, Oedipus seems to be saying that there is little point in his prolonging his life since there is no further crime that he can commit. Immediately, however, he realizes that there is still a very characteristic crime that he can commit, and he urges Antigone to leave him. The realization that it is Antigone who is in danger from him swings Oedipus away from his moment of near-masochistic delight in his scelera back to despair and longing for death. Such rapid changes of mood are one of the declamatory features of Senecan drama. The latter interpretation of the verse is attractive as Oedipus exhibits the same kind of perverse revelling in his crimes elsewhere in the play (cf. 236, 242, 331ff.). Against it, however, is the fact that possum miser, praedico, after a preceding

statement, needs an adversative particle to indicate Oedipus' new realization.

50. uirgo

Thus far Oedipus has addressed his daughter only as nata (2,38,43). Virgo is generally used, like the Greek παρθένος , of an unmarried girl, and it is so used of Antigone in 94 and 103. In this particular context, however, where sexual violation is being considered, it seems that uirgo (especially since it it here used of Antigone for the first time) may be intended to point specifically to her virgin state. Miller captures its force well in his translation '... away, while still a maid', although he does not reflect the fact that uirgo is vocative, rather than nominative in a suppressed clause, dum virgo es.

post matrem

For the contracted expression ('after your/my mother' = 'after my incest with your/my mother'), cf. Sen. Troad. 744f. ipse post Troiam pater/posuisset animos, Med. 637 ipse post terrae pelagique pacem; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 79 post feras, post bella, post Stygium canem (for instances in other authors, see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od. 1.18.5 post uina). In this instance, what is omitted in the abbreviated construction (i.e. a reference to the incest) is what is significant. The ambiguity in matrem - is Oedipus saying to Antigone, 'my mother' or 'your mother'? - is a striking reminder, particularly in the immediate context, of the bizarre nature of the relationship which already exists between father and daughter.

51. manum

Manus is a prominent word motif in Sen. Phoen. (on motifs and figurative language in Senecan drama, see Pratt, TAPhA 94 (1963), 199ff; Owen, TAPhA 99 (1968), 291ff.) as it is in Sen. Herc. Fur.: it occurs twenty-five times in the former (i.e. once in every twenty-six and a half lines) and fifty-five times (i.e. once in every twenty-four lines) in the latter (Denooz, 505; on the significance of manus in Herc. Fur., see Shelton, Seneca's Herc. Fur., 78-80).

The use of manus in Phoen., apart from four instances where it has no particular significance (222, 454, 506, 567), is closely related to the theme of violence vs. restraint which is central to the play (and conspicuous in Senecan drama in general; on this see Pratt, TAPhA 94 (1963), 200ff.) and which creates a unifying bond between the two fragments: Antigone's efforts to restrain Oedipus from killing himself in the first fragment (1-362) find their counterpart in Jocasta's attempt to prevent conflict and bloodshed between her sons in the second fragment (363-664).

Here, as in 10, 61 and 93, manus symbolizes Antigone's physical control of Oedipus (cf. regimen 1, regam ... derigam 62, derige 120 (on the spelling of derigo / dirigo, see Zwierlein OCT, 459), siste 121, repone 122). Manus is not used this way in the second fragment, but in both fragments manus is associated with violence: of Oedipus towards his parents and towards himself (8, 177, 180, 217, 227, 268, 329), of the brothers towards each other (275, 436, 439, 474, 480, 659), of others (Laius 42, Agave 363, Jocasta 428). Dextra likewise is associated with violence, in particular with Oedipus' desire to punish himself (91, 154, 155, 173).

In the first fragment, the juxtaposition of manus (symbolizing restraint) with manus / dextra (symbolizing violence) - see 8 and 10, 91 and 93 - highlights the theme of violence vs. restraint.

53ff. Labdaci clarum domum/.../tenet

This allusion to the power-struggle between Eteocles and Polyneices is the first of what Pratt (Dramatic Suspense, 65) describes as a 'crescendo of reference' to the coming battle of the brothers (further references to future events occur at 108-10, 273-87, 320ff.). Antigone's mention here of the fraternal conflict is brief but significant. The brothers are initially introduced to emphasise Antigone's devotion to Oedipus: they are quarreling over their father's wealthy kingdom, whereas the virtuous Antigone is concerned only to care for Oedipus himself. The contrast having been made between the brothers' greed and Antigone's selfless devotion (cf. S.OC. 337ff. 1365ff.), there is no need for anything more to be said about the brothers in this context, but Antigone deliberately sets out the situation with regard to the kingship. This suggests that Seneca is preparing for the dominance of the theme of the fraternal conflict in the second fragment.

54. opulenta ... regna

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 332 Urbis regens opulenta Thebanae loca.

petant

Both senses of peto, 'seek' and 'attack', are implicit here.

56ff. non hunc (56) ... non hunc (58)

In 56 there is MS consensus on hunc (referring to pater ipse (56) in the previous sentence); this Bentley emended to hanc, which refers to the subject of the previous sentence, pars summa (55), to which pater ipse (56) stands in apposition. In 58 E reads hunc, A hic and Bentley again hanc. Hic, qualifying alter (58) is weak:

the focal point of Antigone's declaration of fidelity is her father, not her brother, Polyneices; moreover, hic is rhetorically less effective, as the emphatic repetition which would be achieved by reading either hunc or hanc in both 56 and 58 is lost. As regards Bentley's hanc, it seems that there is insufficient reason to emend hunc in either place: the fact that hunc is repeated by E in 58 supports the notion that it is the correct reading in 56; hunc, in fact, not only makes sense, but it has greater immediacy than hanc since it refers to Oedipus directly, rather than via the phrase pars summa (55).

57. **regno ... rapto**

I.e. from Polyneices, not from Oedipus (see 104 regna deserui libens).

58. **cateruas ... Argolicas**

Cateruae is commonly used to denote the fighting forces of non-Roman peoples and it may imply a contrast to the highly disciplined, regular units of the Roman army. It is frequently qualified by the contemptuous adjective barbaricae (see Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 601), by a noun in the genitive (e.g. Tib. 1.2.67 Cilicum ... cateruas; Tac. Ann. 1.51 cateruis Germanorum), or, as here, by a proper adjective; cf. Hor. Od. 1.8.16 Lycias ... cateruas; Stat. Theb. 9.611 Amazoniae ... cateruae.

59ff. **non si reuulso/.../remittam**

The separation of the negative from the clause to which it belongs, and its prominence as the first word in the verse (given additional weight by the presence of non in the same position in the preceding

verse) lend force to Antigone's emphatic assertion. For non si, cf. Sen. Phaedr. 121, 615; Oedip. 1028; Agam. 686.

On the literary topos of assertion of devotion, see Hirschberg ad loc., who notes that it occurs in Greek tragedy in Aesch. Prom. 989ff. and S. Phil. 1197ff., and in Latin literature in Prop. 2.7.3f. and Hor. Od. 1.16.9ff.

60. **nexus**

The use of nexus (which occurs nowhere else in Senecan drama although the verb necto occurs nine times; see Denooz, 244f.) is noteworthy. It refers most obviously to Antigone's grip on Oedipus' hand (see 51f. uis nulla ... a tuo nostram manum/corpore resoluet). It can, however, have the sense of a family tie (so Tac. Ger. 20.4; App. Met. 5.20) or of something tangled and intertwined (OLD nexus 4). It seems that Seneca may here be introducing an ironical reminder about the irregular relationship between Oedipus and his children (cf. tam inextricabile 133), which is a recurrent theme in 1-362. Mastronarde (TAPhA 101 (1970), 304f.) observes that in Sen. Oedip. the Sphinx is associated with Oedipus by various linguistic devices, one of them being the imagery of entanglement and confusion which is applied both to the riddles of the monster and to the family of Oedipus, and which culminates in Laius' outburst that Oedipus' incest has resulted in an implicatum malum/ magisque monstrum Sphinge perplexum sua (640f.). In Phoen., it is interesting to note that necto occurs only at 120, where Oedipus himself makes the connection between himself and the Sphinx.

61. **manum hanc remittam**

Hanc probably refers to Oedipus' hand, rather than to Antigone's

own; in other words, Antigone says 'I shall [not] let go of this hand of yours' (see 93 mitte genitoris manum) and not 'I shall [not] loosen the grip of my hand'. See Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 971, where hac manu = 'this hand of yours'; he cites as a parallel Herc. Fur. 1319 and notes that hic is generally used to express affection or supplication.

62. **regam ... derigam**

For paronomasio of this kind, involving words that are etymologically linked, see also 89 salus ... saluum, 90 ulcisci ... inultum, 222 castam ... incestificus, 301f. patris ... patria, 307 indomitum domas, 427 furenti ... furit, 482 exarmatur, armatus.

63ff. **in plana tendis/.../si uiuis sequor**

A 'purple passage' of rhetoric, even by Senecan standards: note the balancing rhetorical questions in plana tendis and praerupta appetis (63), with the corresponding responses uado (63) and non obsto, sed praecedo (64); the syncopated syntax of 63 and 64 (a prolative infinitive, such as ire or fugere must be understood after uis), coupled with the imperative utere and the assonance in utere duce ... duobus, which lends urgency to Antigone's plea; the anaphora in 66 - potes ... potes; the careful structure of 67-73: the anaphora hic ... hic ... hic introducing a tricolon, followed in each case by a rhetorical question uis hanc petamus ... uis hanc petamus ... in hunc ruamus (on the effect of the demonstratives, see on 118ff.); the assonance in 67 - rupes arduo surgit iugo; the alliteration in 68 - spectatque ... spatia subiecti maris; the abundance of epithets - alta, arduo (67), nudus (69), rapax (71): the repetition of non (74) and si (76); the balance of the opposites deprecor and hortor (74), moreris and uiuis, antecedo and

sequor (76).

The passage as a whole bears a striking resemblance both in style and in content to Ira 3.15, where Seneca, advocating suicide to anyone unfortunate enough to live under a tyrant who pierces his friends' breasts with arrows and serves up children to their fathers to eat, imagines that he would say to such a person: Vides illum praecipitem locum? Illac ad libertatem descenditur. Vides illud mare, illud flumen, illud puteum? Libertas illic in imo sedet. Vides illam arborem breuem, retorridam, infelicem? Pendet inde libertas etc. The particular piquancy of the version found here consists in Antigone's insistence that, if Oedipus is determined on suicide, she will join him.

On the topos of ways of death, see on 147ff.

65. duobus

Dative of the person concerned - 'each route is chosen for the two of us' - rather than dative of the agent, since it is Oedipus alone by whom the decision as to where to go will be taken.

66. non potes ... potes

See Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 200 and cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. ɸ1305.

68. spatia ... maris

Cf. Sen. Ep. 79.10 hoc excelsum cacumen et conspicuum per uasti maris spatia ....

69. nudus silex

Cf. Verg. Ecl. 1.47 lapis ... nudus; Plin. Pan. 34.5 nuda saxa.

70. **scissa tellus faucibus ruptis hiat**

The phrase scissa tellus (= 'the earth split') suggests a chasm or crevasse.

72. **partesque ... exesas**

This is a favourite Senecan metaphor to describe the weathering effect of water (usually the sea) on rock; see QN. 2.26.5, 3.25.10, 4.2.10; Ira 3.35.5; Herc. Fur. 154. The wearing away of stone by water is as proverbial in Latin (and Greek) as it is in English (see Otto, Sprichwörter, gutta 2; Smith on Tib. 1.4.18).

76. **si moreris, antecedo, si uiuis sequor**

The presentation of antithetical alternatives is characteristic of declamation; see Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 1243-45. This is an example of a 'terminal' sententia; see on 197f.

77ff. **sed flecte mentem/.../ mori est**

These lines introduce the main theme of the first fragment: whether or not Oedipus should commit suicide.

Suicide was a favourite topic of discussion among Roman Stoics, and Seneca, in particular, was fascinated by it (a full collection of Seneca's views on the subject has been made by Tadic-Gilloteaux in Ant. Class. 32 (1963), 541ff; see also Regenbogen, Schmerz und Tod, 456f.). Whether or not Seneca's ideas about suicide conform to orthodox Stoic doctrine has been disputed (e.g. by Rist, Stoic Philosophy, 233 ff.); more recently, however, Griffin (Seneca: a Philosopher in Politics, 372f.), after a careful comparison of Seneca's teaching with standard Stoic ideas, has concluded that most of the views expressed by Seneca are entirely in keeping with

those of orthodox Stoicism.

How does what Seneca says about suicide in 1-319 conform with the teaching of other Stoics and with his own teaching elsewhere? As Pratt observes (Seneca's Drama, 102), the mad longing of Oedipus for death, which persists right up to the last few lines of the fragment, is the libido moriendi condemned by Seneca in Ep. 24.25: Vir fortis et sapiens non fugere debet e uita, sed exire. Et ante omnia ille quoque uitetur affectus, qui multos occupauit, libido moriendi. The decision to end one's life should be based on ratio and not on affectus. Cicero (Fin. 3.60) sets out the Stoic position with regard to the circumstances justifying suicide: In quo plura sunt quae secundum naturam sunt, huius officium est in uita manere; in quo autem aut sunt plura contraria aut fore uidentur, huius officium est a uita excedere; i.e. a man oppressed by severe illness, dire poverty, old age or unremitting pain would be justified in committing suicide if, as a sapiens, he calculated that the advantages in his life did not outweigh the disadvantages. Seneca does not discuss the basic Stoic position, as expressed by Cicero, in his works, but his teaching is clearly in accordance with it (see Ep. 58.33ff., 70.5f., 120.14).

The overwhelmingly preponderant tendency in Seneca's writings is in favour of rational suicide: at Ep. 77.6 he expresses approval of a Stoic who urged weariness with the daily routine as an adequate motive for the suicide of a chronically, but not desperately, sick man. Oedipus would thus appear to be an undoubted candidate for suicide, since there are few discernible advantages to weigh against his mala (his agonizing guilt, his isolation, his blindness, the behaviour of his sons). The idea put forward by Antigone here and at 187ff. - that it argues greater courage in misfortune to continue living than to commit suicide - is barely mentioned elsewhere by Seneca; it features only fleetingly in the speeches dissuading Hercules from suicide in Herc. Fur. (1275-77),

fleetingly also in Ep. 78.2f., and not at all in the short passage advising against ill-considered suicide in Ep. 24. In Ep. 104.3 Seneca says: ... interdum, etiam si premunt causae, spiritus in honorem suorum uel cum tormento reuocandus sit in ipso ore retinendus est, cum bono uiro uiuendum sit non quamdiu iuuat sed quamdiu oportet. Seneca, who was afflicted by chronic ill-health in his youth, himself considered committing suicide at that time, but was deterred by the thought of the grief that his death would cause his father (Ep. 78.1-2). Oedipus' decision to continue living because Antigone demands it of him (319) is thus clearly in accordance with Seneca's teaching elsewhere, and may be seen as the triumph of Oedipus' ratio over his former, un-Stoic libido moriendi. One can compare Sen. Herc. Fur. 1302ff., where Hercules consents to abandon his plan to commit suicide for the sake of his father, Amphitryon, who cannot endure life without him.

79. **tantis in malis uinci mori est**

Miller translates: 'amidst such woes to be conquered is to die', which is the logical interpretation of the words as they stand, but which makes no sense in the context, since death is precisely what Oedipus wants and what Antigone is trying to persuade him against. A reads tantis in malis uinci malum est, which is unimpressive: malum weakens the effect of the sententia and is probably an instance of the deliberate interpolation for which A is notorious (see Tarrant, Sen. Agam., 60).

Peiper suggested that this line belongs between 192 and 193, where Antigone is again exhorting Oedipus to face up to his troubles rather than to evade them by death. It does not seem, however, that the problem of interpretation posed by 79 is solved by transposing it to a similar context elsewhere in the text. Currie (Neronians and Flavians, 43), who follows Miller's

interpretation of 79, notes a similar clause in Sen. Ep. 58.36: sic mori uinci est, which obviously means 'to die like this is to be conquered'. Phoen. 79, likewise, despite the transposition of mori and uinci, must mean 'amidst such woes to die is to be conquered', since this is what the context demands. Taking into account the self-conscious striving for effect of Senecan sententiae, a transposition of words, resulting in ambiguity, might have been thought to add piquancy to the epigram. Emphasis may also have been a consideration: uinci is the more important, and the more surprising (see on 77ff.), idea. However, neither of these explanations is quite satisfactory and it may be that a radical dislocation of the word order occurred (although it is hard to see why) in the archetype on which E and A are based; thus Seneca may, for instance, have framed the verse to read resiste; uinci est in malis tantis mori. Even uinci est mori would ease the expression slightly.

80ff. Oedipus' disbelief at the pious devotion of Antigone as one of the members of his impious family (80-4) leads him back, by contrast, to his own overwhelming sense of pollution (89ff.). He expresses a series of paradoxical ideas - that his only safety lies in not being saved (89f.), that his existence is a living death (94-6), that Antigone's piety is in fact not piety at all in the context (97f.), that being forced to die is as bad, or worse, than being compelled to live (98-101) - which effectively suggest a mind tormented to its limits. Oedipus' insistence on his desire for death rather than life (102) and on his right to control his dsestiny (103f.) reminds him of the kingdom over which he no longer has control and of his quarrelling sons (107f.), the thought of whom drives him to a more urgent desire for action and death (see on 108ff.). He contemplates various violent means of death for

himself, many of which are echoes of Antigone's suggestions at 67ff. (see on 114ff.), culminating with the notion that he should occupy the rock on which the Sphinx sat (118-20), since he is a worse monster than she was (121f.) (see on 122) and although he could unravel the Sphinx's riddle he cannot explain the riddle of his own family's fate (138f.). Oedipus' mood changes strikingly at 140ff. (see commentary ad loc.), as once again he returns from brooding over his similarity with the Sphinx, to a more active desire for death and the contemplation of different methods of achieving it (147ff.), the climax of which, and of the speech as a whole, is his resolution to re-open his old wounds and thrust his hands right into his brain (173ff.).

This speech of Oedipus, then, although long (101 lines), is not monotonous because of the variation of tone and tempo within it: the speech rises to a mini-climax at 110-20, slows between 120 and 140, where the long crescendo to the final climax (173-81) - hinted at, but feinted away from, in 163-65 - begins.

80ff. Unde in nefanda/... nisi ut noceret

Oedipus' incredulity at the possibility of a virtuous child's being born from him recalls the denial allegedly expressed by Nero's father, Domitius, when he was informed of his son's birth, that quicquam ex se et Agrippina nisi detestabile et malo publico nasci potuisse (Suet. Nero 6).

80. Unde in nefanda specimen egregium domo

This four-word grouping - adjective and noun in agreement enclosing a second noun-adjective pair - is less frequent in Senecan drama

than is synchesis (see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 174). The order of the enclosed noun and adjective is variable, and it is noteworthy that my examination of a random selection of twenty-five examples from six dramas (viz. Herc. Fur. 13, 94, 220, 231, 507, 1146; Med. 4, 216, 737; Thyest. 647, 738, 1039; Agam. 127, 745, 1006; Troad. 217, 456, 1004, 1087; Phoen. 157, 162, 475, 540, 613; Oedip. 46) reveals that in every case, whether the noun precedes the adjective or vice versa, the metre would not permit the order to be reversed; one might otherwise have expected the positions of specimen and egregium to be reversed for the sake of the rhetorical emphasis gained by the juxtaposition of nefanda and egregium.

specimen egregium

The usual figurative meaning of specimen, particularly common in Cicero, is the one found here, viz. 'example', 'model' (in neither of the other two occurrences of specimen in Senecan drama does it have this sense; cf. Med. 389, Thyest. 223), and it is most frequently followed by the genitive. Here, however, there is no dependent genitive, but there is a qualifying adjective, egregium, which does duty for a noun in the genitive (e.g. uirtutis); cf. App. Met. 1. 23 tibi specimen gloriosum arrogaris; perhaps Amm. 23.6.23 Ctesiphon ... rex Pacorus ... Persidis effecit specimen summum. Thus one might translate 'model of excellence' or 'example of virtue', avoiding the possible contradiction in Miller's 'rare type'.

81. ista generi uirgo dissimilis suo

Here, as at 1f. and 309f., Seneca seems to ignore the existence of Ismene. See further Intro., 16f.

82ff. In 82 Oedipus asks whether Fortune has allowed the anomaly of the virtuous Antigone in his tainted house. In 83 he concludes that it could not be so, saying fata bene novi mea etc. In 85 he refers to natura who must have reversed her laws for a daughter like Antigone to be his. Fortuna, fata and natura seem here to be synonyms or near synonyms, for divine providence (cf. Verg. Aen. where fortune and fate are not the same thing since fate represents the unalterable order of events, fortune the arbitrary element in the working of the divine; see Camps, An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid, chap. 5). This may illustrate the tendency of the Stoics to assimilate traditional religious terms, and to apply them to their own concept of divine causation (see Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 51f.). See Sen. Ben. 4.8.3 Sic nunc naturam uoca, fatum, fortuna; omnia eiusdem dei nomina sunt uarie utentis sua potestate.

82. **pius**

Pius occurs six times in Sen. Phoen. (82, 89, 409, 410, 451) and pietas seven times (97, 261, 310, 381, 455, 536, 585), more frequently than in any other Senecan drama (see Denooz, 519). This is not surprising in view of the fact that the entire drama revolves around the piety or lack thereof of the members of the Theban royal house: Oedipus is obsessed by his own impiety, Antigone is the embodiment of filial piety, the brothers are the very opposite and Jocasta urges them repeatedly to be pious. The terms pius and pietas in Phoen. refer primarily to family piety, although when they are used in connection with the fraternal conflict (as in 381, 451, 455, 585), they appear to encompass the notion of loyalty towards Thebes in addition. Pietas towards the gods is nowhere explicitly mentioned but it hovers near the surface, particularly in 451 and in 455 where pietas is said to be sancta.

Fortuna, cedis?

Credis, which has MS consensus, is, however, not completely satisfactory. In the sentence Fortuna, credis? Fortuna could, at least in theory, be either vocative or nominative. If the former is the case, that sentence must mean 'Fortune, do you believe it?', a strange question to ask Fortune whose main attribute is to influence events, not to comment on their likelihood. If Fortuna is nominative, the meaning is 'Is it Fortune, do you think?', which which not only supposes the omission of the verb (not characteristic of Senecan drama and particularly troubling in an ambiguous context) but which demands a negative answer (at least by implication) which does not follow. Nor would it help to punctuate the sentence as a statement, since 'It is fortune, you think' would then be the answer to Unde ... suo? (80f.), which would make little sense. Cedis, the conjecture of von Winterfeld, reiterated by Stuart (CQ 5 (1911), 41), appeals because Fortuna, cedis? gains point from being an inversion of the sentiment, common in Senecan drama, that man must yield to fate against which he is powerless (see, e.g., Oedip. 980ff., Thyest. 615ff.). Stuart points, moreover, to the commonplace nature of the error by which cedis would become credis, citing Sen. Oedip. 980 and Herc. Fur. 1342 (E) as comparable cases.

82ff. aliquis est ex me pius/.../nisi ut noceret

The idea of 'like father, like son' is an ancient literary topos, the origin of which seems to be Hesiod, Works and Days, 235 τίκτουσιν δὲ γυναῖκες ἐοικότα τέκνα γονεῦσιν, where, as West observes ad loc., the point is that the physical resemblance proves the legitimacy of the offspring. West cites as parallels in Latin literature Catull. 61.214ff.; Hor. Od. 4.5.23; Mart. 6.27.3f. He also cites Ter. Heaut. 1018ff. and Ov. Trist. 4.5.31f., Pont.

2.8.31f. as instances where the similarity of character between offspring and parent is proof of the legitimacy of the child or, alternatively, the virtue of the mother. In all the above examples, similarity of physical appearance or of character is adduced to prove legitimacy; here Seneca inverts the traditional form of the topos by making Oedipus question Antigone's origins since she is so unlike him and to the rest of her line. This is particularly piquant since, despite the horror surrounding Antigone's begetting, the one thing which is not at issue is her legitimacy.

84. leges nouas

Nouas = 'new' rather than 'strange' (as at 15 and 23), the point being that any alteration to the supposedly constant laws of nature would be extraordinary. The term 'natural law' in the Stoic sense of a general law which transcends the laws of men is first used by Aristotle in Rhet. 1373b2 (see Dodds on Plato Grg. 483e3). In Seneca the movement of the planets is said to be ordained by the law of nature (Helu. 6.8), as is death (Ep. 101.14, QN. 6.32.12, Helu. 13.2); we read also that being evil for the pleasure of it is against nature's law (Ben. 4.17.3); that the law of nature is to avert hunger, thirst and cold (Ep. 4.10); that liquids in the earth are produced in accordance with the law of nature (QN. 3.15.3), that laws of nature exist under the earth also (QN. 3.16.4).

84f. ipsa se in leges nouas /natura uertet

For the idea, cf. Sen. Oedip. 25, 943, Agam. 34.

A reads uertet, E uertit. Which reading one favours would seem to depend largely on how one punctuates ipsa ... uertit/uertet: if it is taken as a question, parallel to those in 82 - in this case

regeret in fontem citas etc. (85ff.) becomes an (elliptical) answer: '[No, because if that is so] the river will ...' -, it seems reasonable to read uertit (present) to conform with cedis and est (82); on the other hand, if one takes ipsa ... uertit/uertet as a statement (so Zwierlein (OCT)), introducing and forming part of the adynaton which develops from it, it makes sense to read uertet, since the verbs which follow - regeret (85), afferet (86), faciet (87) - are all in the future. There is little to choose between the two possibilities, but uertet perhaps has in its favour the fact that 84b-85a is rhetorically more powerful as a statement than as a question.

85f. **regeret in fontem citas/reuolutus undas amnis**

The idea of a river flowing backwards to its source, symbolizing the reversal of the natural order, has its origin in Greek (see E. Med. 410 ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν χωροῦσι πηγαί ; also E. Supp. 520f., where it is found in an adynaton). In Latin verse, rivers that flow backwards are commonplace (see Otto, Sprichwörter, flumen 5) and tend to fall into two categories: those that occur as illustrations of the power of magic or supernatural action over nature (so, e.g., Tib. 1.2.44; Hor. Od. 1.2.13ff.; Ov. Am. 1.8.6., 2.1.26), and those that, as in this case, form part of an emphatic statement or of an adynaton (so Hor. Od. 1.29.10ff.; Prop. 2.15.33, 3.19.6; Ov. Her. 5.30, Trist. 1.8.1ff., Pont. 4.5.43, 4.6.45f.). On adynata in general, see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od. 1.29.10, Kenney on Lucr. 3.784-86. On adynata in Senecan drama, see Henry, D. & E., The Mask of Power, 14-20, who observe that most of the adynata in the plays affirm the strength of a destructive emotion, and not, as here, the persistence of love and devotion.

citas .../undas

Cf. Sen. Phaedr. 512f. fons largus citas/ defundit undas. As Hirschberg observes ad loc., the epithet citas is significant as the course of a fast-flowing river would be more difficult to change than that of a sluggish one.

87. **Phoebea lampas**

Cf. Verg. Aen. 4.6 postera Phoebea lustrabat lampade terras and see Pease's note.

Hesperus faciet diem

See Hirschberg ad loc. on this unusual expression.

88f. **meas,/pii ... erimus**

For the use of singular and plural in close proximity without distinction of meaning, see also Sen. Phaedr. 595f., Oedip. 28f., Phoen. 27f.

89. **pii quoque erimus**

This is the climax of the short catalogue of the changes which will be effected by the reversal of nature's law. Its rhetorical impact derives from its shock effect: miserias in 88 leads one to expect something else - some further family disaster, perhaps - since the acquisition of pietas would not usually be considered a miseria. However, Oedipus is in no way usual: he is, as he has just pointed out, part of a nefanda domus from which nothing good can be

anticipated, and as such, he cannot be expected to display the reactions and feelings common among men. He is also a man so frenziedly obsessed by his own guilt and pollution that he begins to exult in his impiety. Cf. 330ff., where Oedipus similarly revels in the wickedness of his sons.

89f. **unica Oedipodae est salus,/non esse saluum**

This is a clear imitation of the Vergilian verse, una salus uictis nullam sperare salutem (Aen. 2.354), cited in Sen. QN. 6.2.2, of which there are echoes also in Sen. Troad. 453 (haec una est salus) and Sen. Oedip. 108f. (Una iam superest salus,/si quam salutis Phoebus ostendat uiam). Seneca quotes the Vergilian verse in QN. 6.2.2 to back up his argument that despair brings its own comfort, that of freedom from fear. Here, likewise, the paradox would appear to be an exemplum for Stoic detachment. Oedipus is saying that he will be pious and that the only way for him to achieve piety is to die (cf. Sen. Oedip. 934 mors innocentem sola Fortunae eripit), and so to avenge his father.

90. **adhuc inultum**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 998 and 1002, where Oedipus, having blinded himself, says iusta persolui patri and nil, parricida, dexterae debes tuae. Subsequently, his rejection of Jocasta causes her to kill herself, and Oedipus is plunged into guilt again. At the end of Oedip. it is his crime against his mother that Oedipus feels he has not paid for; his debt to his father has been settled (Oedip. 1043ff.).

91. dextra iners

Cf. Sen. Agam. 551 aliena inerti tela iaculantem manu and Phoen. 173. inertem dexteram introrsus preme.

91f. dextra quid cessas iners/exigere poenas

A common rhetorical feature of both Republican and Senecan drama (see Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 198) is the apostrophe in which a speaker urges himself on to action; see the following instances with cessas: Herc. Fur. 1283f., Troad. 870, Med. 895, Agam. 198; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 842. For further examples of this kind of apostrophe, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 144.

92. quicquid exactum est

The position of adhuc, following rather than preceding exactum est, is emphatic; Oedipus is making it clear that he has not yet finished with his self-punishment. Cf. Sen. Troad. 286f. exactum satis/poenarum et ultra est.

93. mitte genitoris manum

Oedipus' words, mitte genitoris manum, are a deliberate echo of those spoken by Antigone at 61, manum hanc remittam, and Seneca makes Oedipus continue by dismissing as mistaken the notion of filial piety which prompted Antigone's declaration of loyalty to her father. Oedipus should be imagined as trying to free himself impatiently from Antigone's determined clasp.

94. animosa

A favourite Senecan epithet, found both in the dramas and in the prose works; see, e.g., Phoen. 444f. iuuentus .../animosa, Troad. 588 animosa ... mater, Herc. Fur. 201 uirtus animosa; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 977 animosa coniunx; also Ep. 104.4, 110.18, Ira 1.11.3, Ben. 2.16.1, Clem. 2.2.3. For an exhaustive list, see Busa and Zampolli, 89f.

94f. funus extendis meum/longasque uiui ducis exsequias patris

Cf. Ov. Pont. 1.9.51f. tibi exsequias et ... funus .../fecit; Plin. Ep. 3.16.4 ita funus parauit, ita duxit exsequias.

95. longasque uiui ducis exsequias patris

The word order of this verse is illustrative of a common pattern in Senecan drama: a verb enclosed by two interlocked noun-adjective pairs. Canter (Rhetorical Elements, 175) estimates the average occurrence of this combination as being one in every 43 verses. Further examples in Phoen. occur at 132, 254, 440, 568.

96. aliquando terra corpus inuisum tege

Oedipus' request to be buried continues the image (found in 94f.) of him as a living corpse. This is found also in Sen. Oedip. 945ff. and may ultimately be derived from S. OT. 1366ff.

aliquando

= tandem in commands, purposes, exhortations or wishes (OLD aliquando 5); cf., e.g., Cic. Verr. 1.72 Audite quaeso, iudices, et aliquando miseremini sociorum.

aliquando 5); cf., e.g., Cic. Verr. 1.72 Audite quaeso, iudices, et aliquando miseremini sociorum.

97. **peccas honesta mente, pietatem uocas**

The asyndeton causes emphasis to fall on the key word, pietatem, highlighted also by the alliteration in peccas ... pietatem. honesta = καλός.

98. **patrem insepultum trahere**

An instance of Seneca's over-striving for effect: the image of the 'living death' of Oedipus resolves into an image of him as an unburied corpse, which approaches bathos.

98f. **qui cogit mori/... impedit**

This is Oedipus' contribution to the debate on suicide and his counter-argument to Antigone's tantis in malis uinci mori est. He tells her that she is in effect a murderer if she insists on keeping him alive, and this again raises the question of whether Oedipus would justly commit suicide, of whether the disadvantages of his present existence outweigh the advantages (see on 77ff.)

99. **in aequo est**

Cf. Sen. Ben. 2.29.2 ut naturam oderint, quod infra deos sumus, quod non in aequo illis stetimus. This is the only occurrence of in aequo esse (or ponere or stare) in Latin poetry. Nor is the expression very common in prose in general, although it occurs

frequently in the Senecan dialogues (see TLL 2.1034.22ff.).

100. **occidere est uetare cupientem mori**

This verse, as Brink notes (Horace on Poetry, 428), seems to be an imitation by Seneca in a serious context of Hor. AP. 467 inuitum qui seruat, idem facit occidenti where the tone is one of 'mocking sentimentality' (see also Hor. Ep. 1.20.16, where, likewise, the idea occurs in a light-hearted context and Sen. Contr. 8.4 where the context is a serious one). Seneca expresses this sentiment also in Ep. 77.7 tam mali exempli esse occidere dominum quam prohibere. But cf. Ben. 2.14.4, where Seneca, claiming that one should not grant the requests of petitioners without first considering whether they will benefit from what is granted, says: Quemadmodum pulcherrimum opus est etiam inuitos nolentesque seruare, ita rogantibus pestifera largiri blandum et adfabile odium est.

Leo deleted this verse on the grounds that: 1) 101 closely follows 99, and, more importantly, 2) 100 is not a natural corollary of 98f.: non dicit Oedipus mortem infligere eum qui quem a morte prohibeat ... sed crimen idem esse necantis inuitum et seruantis (Obs. Crit., 209f.). Others too have been unhappy about this verse; Tachau, followed by Peiper-Richter, put it after 101, which does not answer Leo's objections. Most modern editors, however, have left the verse where it stands, Zwierlein (Gnomon 38 (1966), 686), followed by Hirschberg, being notable exceptions.

Leo's objections are not convincing in terms of the nature of Senecan drama. Phoen., like the other plays in the Senecan corpus, is declamatory drama, in which the striving for dramatic effect takes precedence over all else, including pure logic. Certainly

101 smoothly follows 99 and 100 interrupts the sequence in aequo est ... nec tamen in aequo est, but 100 is not to be deleted for that reason; it is an elaboration of the thought expressed in 98f., specifically of that contained in the second part of 99 quique properantem impedit, and an example of the florid repetitiveness characteristic of declamation (see also on 112). Occidere est uetare cupientem mori is a neat sententia, a clever imitation of an Horatian verse (cf. Seneca's imitation of Vergil in 89f.), and it fits sufficiently well into the context.

101. **alterum grauius reor**

The idea that being forced to live can be worse than death itself is an ancient topos; see S. El. 1007f. οὐ γὰρ θανεῖν ἔχθιστον, ἀλλ' ὅταν θανεῖν/ χρήζων τις εἶτα μηδὲ τοῦτ' ἐλλ λαβεῖν; E. Tro. 637 τοῦ ζῆν δὲ λυπρῶς κρεῖσσόν ἐστι κατθανεῖν; Ov. Her. 10.82 morsque ... minus poenae quam mora mortis habet; Sen. Contr. 8.4 Quid est in uita miserius quam mori uelle?; Sen. Agam. 996 Mortem aliquid ultra est? Vita, si cupias mori (see Tarrant ad loc.).

103. **desiste coepto**

Cf. Front. Strat. 3.6.4 simulauit se coepto desistere.

ius uitae ac necis

For the expression, see also Sen. Thyest. 608 and see Tarrant ad loc.

104. regna deserui libens

On the significance of the voluntary abdication of Oedipus, see Intro., 44. .

libens

Libens occurs ten times in Senecan drama (see Denooz, 204) and always in this emphatic position in the line. See Tarrant on Agam. 405 for equivalent Greek and Latin expressions.

104f. regna .../regnum

There is in the paronomasia a clever play on the nuances of regnum: in the first instance, regna has the sense of 'kingdom', in the second, it means 'control'. Cf. the ambivalence in the Stoic understanding of kingship, in terms of which only the wise man is king.

105. fida ... comes

A comes is conventionally fidus in Latin poetry, see, e.g., Tib. 1.5.63; Sen. Troad. 83; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 601; Luc. 5.804; Stat. Silu. 2.3.23f., Theb. 9.205, 12.405. Oedipus here picks up Antigone's words (52f.) and uses them in his own argument. This kind of interlocking of speeches argues against the theory of Leo and others that Phoen. consists of a series of independent speeches composed for declamation (see Intro., 7 n.2).

fida

Tarrant on Agam. 284 notes that Seneca preferred fidus to fidelis in his dramas: he used fidus 20 times and fidelis 5 times (see Denooz, 487), whereas in comedy the figures are almost exactly reversed.
On the sarcastic note introduced by fida, see Wurnig, Gefühlsdarstellungen in den Tragödien Senecas, 96.

106. **sed**

Sed is used here, as at 110, to elaborate and affirm the idea which precedes it; it has the sense of 'and in fact', 'and what is more' (see OLD sed 3a).

notum

Notus here has the pejorative sense of 'notorious'; so Cic. Cael. 13.31, Fam. 10.14.1; Juv. 6.42, 6.314.

106f. **notum nece/ensem paterna**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 769 and S. OT. 811, where the murder weapon is said to have been a staff (stipes, σκῆπτρον). No weapon is mentioned in the mythological handbooks of Apollodorus and Hyginus, nor do Homer or Diodorus Siculus refer to one.
The word order here is arranged for maximum rhetorical effect: the alliteration notum nece, the emphatic position of nece at the end of the verse, the withholding of ensem until the beginning of 106 to create anaphora with ensem in 105, the positioning of paterna, the most important word, at the very end of the sentence.
Hirschberg ad loc. observes that notum ensem is a Virgilian expression, citing Verg. Aen. 12.759 nomine quemque uocans notumque efflagitat ensem.

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trade ... tradis

Paronomasia for emphasis; cf. 9f. uideo ... uideor, 43f. uides ... uideo.

107f. an gnati .../et illum

The tone of these words is bitter, which does not accord with Oedipus' statement a few lines earlier: regna deserui libens (104). Probably the answer is to be found in 108ff., where the conflict between the brothers is alluded to: Oedipus abdicated willingly, but when his sons began to quarrel over the throne, he became embittered towards them.

108. faciet, ubicumque est, opus

E has opus, A has scelus. Scelus is attractive because it is more direct than opus, and because scelus is thematic in the play as a whole. However, it is difficult to see why scelus should have been corrupted to opus, although the reverse process might easily have occurred for the above reasons. On this account, and because opus not only makes complete sense - the opus of a sword being to commit a scelus (see Hirschberg ad loc. for parallels) - but is supported by Senecan usage elsewhere (see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 117) it seems prudent to accept the difficilior lectio, as all recent editors of the play have done.

Leo, in an attempt to introduce a direct reference to crime, emended faciet to facinore (cf. Petr. Sat. 80.4), in which he was followed by Peiper-Richter. Ingenious though facinore is, the text should not be emended, because the verse makes perfect sense with faciet, on which there is MS consensus.

108ff. This is the second allusion in the 'crescendo of reference' to the fraternal conflict (see on 53ff.) and the first by Oedipus. Again the allusion is brief but significant: it makes clear the fact that Oedipus has little love for either of his sons, thus foreshadowing his refusal to intervene in the strife between them and his words in 355: frater in fratrem ruat.

The thought of his quarreling sons drives Oedipus into a frenzy. In the previous lines he has been almost calm, reasoning with Antigone and trying to persuade her to let him die, but at this point his mood changes and he plunges again into an urgent desire for action and death (cf. 12ff.). It is by sudden changes of tone and mood like this (a characteristic feature of declamation) that Seneca is able to prevent the long speeches, of which his dramas are largely composed, from dragging intolerably.

110ff. The introduction at this point of a funeral pyre, following closely upon the mention of a sword as a means of suicide, recalls Dido's death in Verg. Aen. 4 (see esp. 504ff. and 645ff., where the sword and the pyre are mentioned in close association).

110. **uastum aggerem**

For the combination, cf. Sen. Phaedr. 1015 consurgit ingens pontus in uastum aggerem. The use of agger to denote a funeral pyre seems to have originated with Ovid (see Bömer on Ov. Met. 9.234) and is fairly common in Latin poetry subsequently; see Sen. Herc. Fur. 1216; Luc. 2.300; Val. Fl. 3.337; Stat. Theb. 6.58, 12.62, Silu. 3.3.36.

112. **haerebo ad ignes, funebrem escendam struem**

E has haerebo ad ignes, funebre escendam struem, A reads erectam ad ignes, funebrem ascendam struem. The simple restoration of -m to funebrem renders the version of E intelligible, whereas erectam in A makes no sense (Gronovius conjectured erepam which is not compelling). However, aside from textual discrepancies, the verse is peculiar. Richter, following Gruter, deleted it on the grounds of superfluity, never a strong argument in Senecan drama, given its characteristic of over-statement and repetition. Superfluity, in fact, is not the problem: the notion expressed in haerebo ad ignes is grotesque even for Seneca and Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 117) notes that 'Seneca kennt nirgends haerere ad' (Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 78 n. 183 observes, however, that, in view of the occurrence of haerere ad in Catull. 21.6; Prop. 4.1.110 and Val. Fl. 3.641, the construction is 'nichts Befremdliches'); furthermore, the order of events envisaged in 110f. seems absurd - first Oedipus will hurl himself onto the pyre, then he will cling to the fire, then he will climb the pyre. Given these difficulties and taking into account the fact that 113 would follow 111 smoothly, deletion of 112 is attractive.

113. **pectusque ... durum**

For the expression see Ov. Met. 14.693, 758; Sen. Ben. 1.3.1; Luc. 10.71f.; see also 582. Durus here has the sense of 'stubborn', i.e. in that Oedipus has been clinging to life.

in cinerem dabo

The expression in cinerem/-es do occurs also in [Verg.] Cul. 313f., Sen. Troad. 739 and Sil. 6.716. In the first two cases, it appears to mean 'reduce to ashes', while in Sil. 6.716 - in cineres monumenta date atque inuoluite flammis - it has the sense of 'throw into the fire'. Here, it seems that in cinerem dabo could have either sense, although probably it would be best to translate it as 'I shall reduce to ashes', since Oedipus has already stated that he is going to throw himself into the fire.

114. **hoc quicquid in me uiuit**

See on 48 and 98.

saeuum ... mare

A placidum mare would be just as effective for drowning oneself in if one were so inclined, but it is in keeping with Oedipus' mood of guilt, anger and despair that the sea should be saeuum (cf. 116 torua ... uada).

114ff. In this section, Oedipus is echoing Antigone's words at 67ff.: saeuum mare corresponds to subiecti maris (68), 115 to 67, rapidus

Ismenos (116) to rapax torrens (71). The repetition here of ubi and duc corresponds to the repetition of hic and uis hanc in 67ff.

115. **duc**

Duc (E) here as in 117 is to be preferred to dic (A) in view of si dux es in 118, in combination with which dic would make little sense.

116. **rapidus ... Ismenos**

Rivers are commonly rapidus in Latin poetry; see, e.g., Plaut. Men. 64, Bacch. 85; Catull. 63.16; Tib. 1.2.44; Hor. Sat. 2.3.242; Ov. Met. 2.637; Sen. Med. 411, although elsewhere in Senecan drama very different epithets are used of the Ismenos: tenuis (Oedip. 42), tacitum (Agam. 319); cf. languidus ([Sen.] Herc. Oet. 141), Tarrant (on Agam. 318ff.) suggests that the violence attributed to the Ismenos in Phoen. was perhaps influenced by Ov. Met. 2.244 where it is said to be celer.

torua ... uada

Cf. Val. Fl. 8.218f. ... toruus ubi .../ in freta ... Hister descendit. Neither Lipsius' emendation of torua to torta, nor Gronovius' conjecture, curua, have found favour with modern editors of the play. And with good reason: torua, on which there is MS consensus, is a word which is not uncommon in Senecan drama (it occurs fifteen times; see Denooz, 540), there is a parallel for its application to a river (see ref. to Val. Fl.), and to describe the Ismenos, quite a small river, as having torua uada is

characteristic of Senecan rhetorical exaggeration. (See also 114 on saeuum ... mare and see Zwierlein in WüJbb. 6 (1980), 183 n.7).

uoluat

There is MS consensus on ducat, for which Peiper substituted uoluat, presumably because it suggests more vigorous movement and thus is more appropriate than the calm ducat to a river said to be torua and rapidus. Zwierlein (OCT), in defense of ducat, cites Phoen. 604 and Oedip. 469, in which traho and deduco respectively are applied to the flow of the River Pactolus, which, however, is in neither place described as turbulent, fast-flowing, angry or anything similar. Thus the comparison is not useful. Peiper's uoluat appeals and the corruption is easily explicable as resulting from the proximity of duc (115 and 117).

117. **duc ubi ferae sint, ubi fretum, ubi praeceps locus**

Heinsius, followed by Leo, deleted 117, but although it is largely repetitive - ferae is the only new element introduced into the catalogue - there seems to be no compelling reason to get rid of it. It not only makes good sense, but it also takes one back to Oedipus' first outburst of longing for death in 12ff., to the ferae (Actaeon's dogs and Zethus' bull) and to the fretum into which Ino leapt from a praeceps locus. See further Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 117f., Hirschberg ad loc.

Zwierlein (OCT) reads sunt here with E, but sint of A gains support from sit (115) and uoluat (116), and although it could be argued that Seneca intended sunt as a kind of uariatio (for which I have found no parallels elsewhere in Senecan drama), it seems likely

that sunt entered the text under the influence of es (118) and that Seneca reserved the indicative for emphasis in the final clause of the series.

118. si dux es

This recalls Antigone's duce me in 65.

118ff. illuc(118) ... huc(120) ... hic(121) ... hoc saxum(122)

The abundant use of demonstrative pronouns and adjectives is characteristic of Seneca at his most declamatory. The effect is to achieve vividness by creating a sense of immediacy. Cf. 6ff. hac uita ... hoc aspectu ... hac manu, 27ff. istis siluis ... hunc ... huc, 67ff. hic ... hanc ... hic ... hanc, 141ff. hoc animo ... hanc ... animam ... sceleri haec, 217ff. manumque hanc ... hoc caelum ... hoc solum ... has auras; see also Troad. 960ff., 1006f., Agam. 900ff., Thyest. 1012ff., Herc. Fur. 1193f., 1229f. The use of demonstratives would also give an actor or declaimer scope for dramatic gestures (on this see also on 498ff.).

119. alta rupe

See 67 alta rupes (and see on 114ff.) and cf. Sen. Oedip. 95, where the Sphinx is described as asking her riddle e superna rupe.

119f. semifero ../. ore

A transferred epithet: the Sphinx was semifera but her mouth was human, since she had the body of a winged lion and the head of a woman.

dolos ... nectens

For the expression see Liv. 1.5.6, 27.28.4; Sen. Troad. 927f; Sil. 3.234f. (TLL 5.1860.33f.). Ogilvie on Liv. 1.5.6 observes that dolos ... nectere 'is no doubt meant to suggest the Greek δόλους ὑφαίνειν.' See commentary on nexus 60.

120. **dirige huc gressus pedum**

Cf. Verg. Aen. 5.162 and 11.855 huc derige gressum.

120ff. **dirige ... siste ... repone**

An ascending tricolon with the climax effectively delayed by dira ne sedes (121).

121. **dira sedes**

Cf. Stat. Theb. 8.241f. diraque ... in sede latentem/Oedipoden.

122. **monstrum repone maius**

See on 60. Cf. Sen. Oedip. 641, where Oedipus refers to himself as magisque monstrum Sphinge perplexum sua. The conceit appears to be Senecan.

hoc saxum insidens

The mistake of A, where saxo occurs, is easily explained, since insideo is more commonly followed by the dative. The accusative, however, is also well attested, see Stat. Silu. 5.2.167; Tac. Ann. 3.61.2; App. Met. 9.32.1.

124ff. Enumerations of this sort are common in Senecan drama (see 12ff. where the dreadful deeds which have taken place on Cithaeron are listed, 420ff. where the agents needed to carry Jocasta swiftly to the battlefield are enumerated, 602ff. where Jocasta lists the places where Polyneices could find himself a kingdom; for examples in the other dramas, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 75f.). In this instance the rhetorical device creates suspense, since the main clause aduerte mentem (131), which states the purpose for which all the different people are being summoned, is delayed until the very end of the catalogue. Also, the catalogue creates a gap between hoc saxum insidens/obscura ... uerba ... loquor (122f.) and the obscura uerba themselves (134ff.), so that the fact that Oedipus has got nowhere near the Sphinx' rock by the time he utters the riddle, is not so obvious.

Seneca's selection of the places listed here (124-30), from which men should come to hear the riddle of Oedipus' fate, was clearly not made with a central idea in mind, since the areas mentioned are not connected, except insofar as they are all relatively close to Thebes, which itself forms part of the catalogue. Cf. the hunting aria at the beginning of Phaedr. (1-30), where the list of geographical references is carefully composed and limited to places in Attica.

124f. Assyrio loca/possessa regi

I.e. Thebes. The Assyrius rex is Cadmus, the legendary founder of Thebes; his father was Agenor, king of Tyre, hence the epithet Assyrius, since in the eighth and seventh centuries BC Tyre was part of the Assyrian Empire.

125f. nemus/serpente notum

When Cadmus founded Cadmeia, later Thebes, he had to kill the dragon which guarded the spring (Apollod. 3.4.1; E. Ph. 930ff.; Paus. 9.10.1; Hyg. Fab. 178). The nemus here referred to must be the one in which the spring was believed to have been.

126. serpente notum

= 'well-known because of the serpent.' For the ablative expressing the cause of fame, see Ov. Met. 1.198 notus feritate Lycaeon; Luc. 2.591 noti ... erepto uellere Colchi; Tac. Ann. 15.53 Pisonem notum amore uxoris.

quo ... latet

Heinsius proposed quod ... lavat (cf. Sen. Troad. 384, Oedip. 714). There seems, however, to be no compelling reason to emend the text: the use of lateo (= 'lie hidden') is poetical but well-attested (see TLL. 7.996.31ff.) and quo = ubi (see L-H-S 2.277 who note its use in late Latin) is found also in Sen. Troad. 408 (quo non nata iacent) and 482 (quo lateat infans). For the association of Dirce with the grove of Cadmus (see on 125f.), see also Sen. Oedip. 712-14.

127. **Eurotan bibis**

The Eurotas was a long river which flowed through the whole length of Laconia.

For the expression, cf. Sen. Agam. 319 bibis Ismenon.

128. **Spartenque**

On the form see Tarrant, Sen. Agam., 365; Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 119.

Spartenque fratre nobilem gemino

According to one tradition, Castor and Pollux were both born of Jupiter to Leda, wife of Tyndareus of Sparta (Hymn. Hom. 17.1ff., 33.1ff.), according to another, Pollux (or Polydeuces) was Leda's son by Jupiter, while Castor was fathered by Tyndareus (Pind. Nem. 10.80). They were especially worshipped in Sparta.

fratre ... gemino

In Latin poetry the singular of geminus is sometimes used for the plural, see also Hor. Od 3.29.64; Ov. Fast. 4.810; Sen. Phaedr. 275; Val. Fl. 2.427.

130. **uberis ... soli**

Genitive of quality.

agros ... tondes

For the metaphor, cf. Verg. Georg. 1.71, 1.290, 4.277; Tib. 4.1.172; Ov. Rem. Am. 192.

131. **saeva Thebarum lues**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 107f., where Oedipus, referring to the continuing influence of the Sphinx, says illa nunc Thebas lues/perempta perdit.

132. **luctifica**

There are no fewer than five occurrences in Senecan drama of this rare and almost exclusively poetical word; see also Sen. Herc. Fur. 102, Phaedr. 995, Oedip. 3, 632. For examples elsewhere, see Verg. Aen. 7.324; Val. Fl. 3.292; Stat. Theb. 10.552; Sil. 6.557. On the origin and use of the compound adjective, see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 13 para. 20.

caecis uerba committens modis

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 92 caecis uerba nectentem modis and see Ogilvie on Liv. 1.57.6, who observes that the use of modis with an adjective instead of an adverb is most uncommon after Plautus and Terence and therefore striking.

uerba committens

= 'connecting/putting together words'. For this use of committo, see Quint. Inst. 9.4.33 (see also OLD committo 2c).

133. **posuit**

Pono here = 'pose', 'propound', as in Cic. De Or. 1.102, Fam. 9.26.1.

inextricabile

= 'insoluble'; cf. Plin. HN. 2.85 where certain mathematical calculations are described as incomperta ... et inextricabilia. Hirschberg ad loc. notes that inextricabilis occurs first in poetry in Verg. Aen. 6.27 where it is used of a labyrinth.

134ff. **aui gener/.../sibi et nepotes**

Cf. Cic. Cluent. 199 where it is said of Sassia: Atque etiam nomina necessitudinum, non solum naturae nomen et iura mutauit: uxor generi, noverca filii, filiae paelex; also Ov. Met. 10.347f. (of Myrrha, who fell in love with her father, Cinyras) tune eris et matris paelex et adultera patris?/tune soror nati genetrixque uocabere fratris?

134. **aui gener**

Oedipus married Jocasta and so became her father's (his grandfather's) son-in-law. Jocasta's father has no place in the tale of Oedipus and his troubles; he is introduced here simply to make the riddle more complicated.

135. **frater ... fratrum**

The repetition of frater in two different cases but referring to

the same person in both instances stresses the confusion of the family relationships. The chiasmus throws the stress on fratrum.

136. uiro

Seneca uses the more general term, uir, rather than the specific coniunx, in order to emphasise the ambiguity of Oedipus' position in relation to Jocasta. Cf. Sen. Oedip. 1009, where Jocasta says Quid te uocem?

137. **sibi et**

On the inversion of et, see Hirschberg ad loc.

137. **monstra quis tanta explicat**

For explico used in the sense of attempting to explain something beyond one's comprehension, cf. Verg. Aen. 2.362; App. Met. 4.13.

monstra ... tanta

Monstra ... tanta is ambiguous: it could refer to the events mentioned by Oedipus - the son's being a rival to his father, the brother's being both the brother and the parent of his children etc. - or it could refer to the actual people involved in the bizarre tangle of relationships, i.e. it could be translated either as 'such awful happenings' or as 'such monstrous creatures'. The former option seems more attractive, since Oedipus is not concerned with the monstrousness of the other members of his family, but only with the deeds perpetrated by him, which resulted in the creation of the genetic confusion.

138. ego ipse

Emphatic (cf. 111 ipse me), with a concessive flavour; trans. 'even I'.

uictae spolia ... Sphingis

= '[who took] spoils from the Sphinx'. For this genitive with spolia, see also Liv. 1.10.5; Cic. Manil. 55; Verg. Aen. 12.94; Sen. Agam. 176.

For Oedipus' pride in his conquest of the Sphinx, cf. Sen. Oedip. 86ff.

139. **haerebo fati tardus interpres mei**

Haerebo ... tardus is pleonastic; trans. '[Even I] shall hesitate and shall be slow to explain my fate'.

interpres

See Plaut. Poen. 444, where Oedipus is referred to as Sphingi interpres.

140ff. Swoboda, Peiper-Richter and others have held that this fresh outburst by Oedipus is a response to a speech by Antigone that has been lost in transmission, and therefore have supposed a lacuna in the text between 139 and 140. Oedipus' sudden change of mood at 140 is striking - from brooding over the similarity between the riddling Sphinx and the genetic riddle he has created, Oedipus reverts to an active desire for death - as is his abrupt turning

back to Antigone with Quid perdis ultra uerba? However, as Mesk (WS 37(1915), 312) and Paul (Eigenart von Senecas Phoenissen, 38) have pointed out, Oedipus' impatient questions could quite well be a response to Antigone's last words at 77-9, and Paul has observed that they mark Seneca's return to the dialogue form after Oedipus' virtual monologue from 110-39. One may compare Phaedr. 559, for example, where Hippolytus reverts to the subject of women raised by the Nurse after a seeming digression on the delights of the simple life of the woods. One may argue also that the allusion to the tangled horror of Oedipus' incest at 134-7 naturally inspires the further thought that, in the light of this horror, Antigone's attempt to dissuade Oedipus from his proposed suicide must be futile.

140. quid perdis ultra uerba

This question would appear to serve the same purpose in the second person singular as does the kind of question in the first person singular that is common in rhetoric, and which is generally used to introduce a further series of details on the same subject as before, cf. Cic. Verr. 2.119 Quid porro argumenter...?, Clu. 59 Quid est quod iam ... plura dicamus?, Verr. 2.160 Nam quid ego de Syracusanis loquar?

perdis ... uerba

For the expression, cf. Sen. Ira 3.23.4 quaedam in uxorem eius ... dixerat, nec perdiderat dicta.

pectus ... ferum

For the expression, see Acc. trag. 26(R^2); Sen. Herc. Fur. 1226, Phaedr. 414; Val. Fl. 5.533.

140f. **pectus .../mollire**

Cf. Hor. Epod. 5.13f. impube corpus, quale posset impia/mollire Thracum pectora; Sen. Phaedr. 414 mitiga pectus ferum.

quid pectus ferum/mollire temptas precibus

Cf. 307, where, in the second of two questions introduced by quid, Oedipus asks quid prece indomitum domas?

141. **mollire ... precibus**

Cf. Ter. Phorm. 498 ut neque misericordiae neque precibus molliri queas.

hoc animo sedet

The expression [in] animo sedere may be followed, as here, by the infinitive (effundere); see, e.g., Val. Fl. 2.383 si sedet Aegaei scopulos habitare profundi ....Elsewhere it is followed by ut/ne and the subjunctive, so, e.g., Verg. Aen. 4.15f. si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet/ne cui me uinclo uellem sociare iugali ....

141ff. hoc animo/... hanc .../animam

Canter (Rhetorical Elements, 161) notes that this type of paronomasia is fairly rare in Senecan drama; he cites as examples Herc. Fur. 1184f. tuique nominis semper mihi/ numen secundum, Troad. 301f. O tumide, rerum dum secundarum status/ extollit animos, timide cum increpuit metus, Thyest. 135 et maior placeat culpa minoribus.

142. cum morte luctantem

Luctor is first used to describe a struggle between life and death in Verg. Aen. 4.694f. ... Irim demisit Olympo/ quae luctantem animam nexosque resolueret artus; see also Ov. Ib. 125f.; Luc. 3.578; Sil. 10.293ff.

diu

Oedipus' anima has been struggling with death for a long time since, as a result of the oracular utterance to Laius, he was under sentence of death already in the womb.

142f. effundere .../animam

For the expression cf. Ov. Her. 7.181 est animus nobis effundere uitam; Verg. Aen. 1.98 non potuisse tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra.

143. tenebras

= 'death'; so Prop. 2.20.17 [iuro] ... me tibi ad extremas

mansurum, uita, tenebras; Sen. Herc. Fur. 280 abrumpe tenebras.

sceleri ... meo

Oedipus does not here appear to be referring specifically to one of his two crimes against his parents, but rather to his general state of guilt.

The consistency with which ego and meus in their various forms occur in emphatic positions in Oedipus' speeches (see 30,31f., 44, 84, 88, 94, 102, 104, 109, 111, 138, 139) is not fortuitous: by this device Seneca suggests the obsessive self-absorption of the potential suicide.

143f. tenebras ../. nox

There is some clever wordplay here: tenebrae and nox are virtual synonyms for darkness and night, yet each is used here in a sense other than the obvious one, so that the apparent similarity makes the actual divergence in sense more telling.

144. nox

Here nox clearly means blindness (so also Ov. Met. 3.335, 6.473, 7.2, 7.835; Sen. Oedip. 1049; Stat. Theb. 1.47). However, nox is traditionally also used in Latin poetry as a metaphor for death (see, e.g., Catull. 5.6; Verg. Aen. 6.390, 6.462, 6.866, 10.746; Prop. 2.15.24; Hor. Od. 1.28.15; Sen. Oedip. 5), and Seneca may here also be exploiting this nuance of the word since, as has been noted, the image of Oedipus' existence as a 'living death' is a recurrent one (see on 98).

condi

Condo quite commonly has the sense of 'bury' in both poetry and prose and it equally commonly means 'hide'. Here, as in Sen. Troad. 521, both senses seem to apply.

145. si quid ultra Tartarum

For the desire to be buried beneath Tartarus, see also Sen. Thyest. 1012ff. and Tarrant ad loc; cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1225.
As Hirschberg observes ad loc., in Sen. Oedip., Oedipus, by contrast, considered it enough to be buried in the depths of Tartarus itself (868ff.).

145f. tandem libet/quod olim oportet

Oedipus is saying that death is now, for the first time, to him a pleasure, as it has long been his duty.

146. morte prohiberi haud queo

See 103f. ius uitae ac necis/meae penes me est; also 152f. For the thought, cf. Mart. 1.42 mortem non posse negari; Sen. Ep. 70.21 ad moriendum nihil aliud in mora esse quam uelle, Phaedr. 87 mortem uolenti deesse mors numquam potest.

147ff. Seneca lists four possible means of death from which Antigone may keep Oedipus : the sword, falling, the noose, poison. Fraenkel (Philologus 87 (1932), 470ff.), commenting on Ar. Frogs 118ff., where Heracles suggests to Dionysus three quick ways of reaching

Hades - by hanging, by poison, by leaping from a high place, believes that this is the first expression of the three methods of suicide which were commonly approved and almost proverbial among the ancients (see Schol. ad Pind. Ol. 1.197 τριῶν οὐσῶν ... βιοτεύειν δι' ὧν τις ἀπώλυτο, βρόχου, κωνείου, βαράθρου). Fraenkel (471) further observes that there was an even more popular triad of 'Selbstmordwege' which included the sword and omitted hemlock; he cites another scholiast on Pind. Ol. 1.97 who says τρία λέγεται καὶ κοινῶς τὰ πρὸς τὸν θάνατον συνεργοῦντα, ξίφος, ἀγχόνη, κρημνός and notes the appearance of this triad also in Latin literature, viz. Hor. Epod. 17.70ff., Luc. 9.106. Ovid's Phyllis (Her. 2.131-44), he notes, goes beyond the limits of the traditional triad and considers suicide by leaping (into the sea), by poison, by the sword or by hanging, i.e. she combines all the elements of the two popular triads, just as Seneca's Oedipus does here. There is no reason to assume that Ovid influenced Seneca in this respect - there are no linguistic correspondences between the two passages nor are the 'Selbstmordwege' listed in the same order - but it is noteworthy that Seneca's choice of methods of suicide is in complete conformity with the literary tradition and thus should not be interpreted as having any particular significance. On the topos of varied means of death, see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od. 1.28.17, Winterbottom on Quint. Decl. 260.24. See also on 63ff.

147. **noxias lapsu uias**

Lit. = 'paths dangerous in point of falling'. For this sense of noxius, see Tac. Hist. 5.17 paludes hostibus noxias.

148. **cludes**

Although forms in au are better supported in the MSS than those in u (see Tarrant, Sen. Agam., 366) there is MS consensus on cludes here (see Zwierlein, OCT, 462). This form, though previously rare, becomes fairly common in Silver Latin (TLL 3. 1300.51ff.1).

artis ... laqueis

For this noun-epithet combination, see Cic. Verr. 1.13: Carm. de Aug. Bell. Aegypt. 49 (Poet. Lat. Min. I ed. Baehrens); Plin. Ep. 2.8.2.

149. **herbas quae ferunt letum auferes**

Cf. Sen. Med. 270 letales aufer herbas.

Heinsius (Advers., 51) wished to read ferant for ferunt (cf. 548 where he proposed petant for petunt), with the subjunctive expressing characteristic. Since, however, both ferunt and petunt, on which there is MS consensus, make satisfactory sense as they stand, it seems best to regard the relative clause quae ... letum as expressing a simple fact and to retain the indicative.

150. **tandem**

Tandem here conveys Oedipus' irritation; trans. 'for heaven's sake' (cf. Cic. Cat. 1.1.1. Quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?; also Ter. Phorm. 231; Caes. BG. 1.40.4).

151ff. **ubique mors est/.../mille ad hanc aditus patent**

For the topos that there are numerous ways to achieve death, see also Tib. 1.3.50 nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente uias; Sen. Contr.

Contr. 7.1.9 multas rerum mortis uias aperuit, 1.8.6 totidem ad mortem uiae sunt; Sen. Ep. 70.14 Nil melius aeterna lex fecit, quam quod unum introitum nobis ad uitam dedit, exitus multos, Ep. 12.10 Patent undique ad libertatem uiae multae, breves, faciles, Phaedr. 475f. quam uaria leti genera mortalem trahunt/carpuntque turbam; Luc. 3.689 mille modos inter leti.

151. **ubique mors est : optume hoc cauit deus**

Such sententious utterance on a particular excellence in the providential arrangement of the world is common in Seneca; cf., e.g., Ep. 70.14 Nil melius aeterna lex fecit, quam quod unum introitum nobis ad uitam dedit, exitus multos, 12.10 Agamus Deo gratias, quod nemo in uita teneri potest.

optume

A has optime, E optume. The rarity with which the form in -u occurs in Senecan drama suggests that E has preserved the correct reading here (see Zwierlein, OCT, 459). Perhaps Seneca favoured the archaism here to suit the religious content of the thought; cf. Troad. 486 where, likewise, A reads optume, E optume and the context is a religious one.

cavit

Cavo is here used in its legal sense of 'prescribe', 'make provision for'; cf. Cic. Verr. 1.110 Quid si plus legarit quam ad heredem heredesue perueniat ...: cur hoc ... non caves?, Agr. 3.8-9 Tu uero, Rulle, quid quaeris? ... Ut meliore iure tui soceri fundus

Hirpinus sit siue ager Hirpinus ... quam meus paternus auitusque fundus Arpinas? Id enim caues.

152f. nemo non .../at nemo

The assertion contained in at nemo (153) gains point by contrast with the phrase nemo non (152), more common in prose, especially in Cicero, than in poetry (but see also Sen. Phoen. 277, Thyest. 213).

152f. eripere uitam nemo non homini potest,/at nemo mortem

Antithesis between pairs of clauses is common in Senecan drama, cf., e.g., 76 si moreris, antecedo, si uiuis, sequor, 522ff. nempe nisi bellum foret,/ ego te carerem; nempe si tu non fores,/ bello carere,. 589f. fraudis alienae dabo/ poenas, at ille praemium scelerum feret?, 592f. regia frater meus/ habitabat superba, parua me abscondat casa (see also 384, 419, 618f., 632; for examples in other plays, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 153f.).

153. mille

Mille here, as commonly in Latin, is hyperbolic (so in Greek); cf., e.g., Catull. 5.7 da mi basia mille, deinde centum; Hor. Ep. 1.6.19 spectant oculi te mille loquentem. Seneca, in his dramas, not infrequently uses a definite number (almost invariably inflated for rhetorical effect) rather than an indefinite word (e.g. multus, saepe) to indicate amount so, e.g., Agam. 455 (millesimam), Troad. 1020, 820 (centum), Phaedr. 551 (mille); cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 635, 1388 (mille).

154. nil quaero

This is very compressed; nil here means 'no external means by which I may kill myself'. Oedipus proceeds in the rest of the verse and in the following verse to explain his assertion. This is clever rhetoric: Oedipus alludes to his self-blinding and then feints away from this topic to return to it with a vengeance at 163. In Ep. 70.21 Seneca declares that lack of a weapon need not prevent a man who is determined from killing himself, and he says with reference to the German prisoner who choked himself to death with a lavatory sponge: Undique destitutus inuenit, quemadmodum et mortem sibi deferret et telum, ut scias ad moriendum nihil aliud in mora esse quam uelle. See also Sen. Phaedr. 878 mortem uolenti deesse mors numquam potest.

154f. dextra noster et nuda solet/ bene animus uti

The hyberbaton is effective: the position of noster causes stress to fall on nuda (already given prominence by the concessive et) as a result of the alliteration so achieved; noster, placed as it is before et nuda, with which it is linked in terms of position and sound (viz. the alliteration) though not of syntax, comes to have an association not only with its rightful substantive, animus, but also with dextra; the emphatic position of bene brings out Oedipus' twisted thinking: bene is not the word most people would use to describe an act as grotesque as Oedipus' self-blinding, but to Oedipus himself it was well done (cf. Sen. Oedip. 998 bene habet, peractum est.).

Nuda = 'without a weapon' (OLD nudus 4a); cf. 405 and see commentary ad loc.

noster ../. animus

Periphrasis for nos (= ego); cf. Plaut. Bacch. 528 nam illud animus meus miratur, Cist. 554f. animus audire expetit/ut res gesta sit; Sall. Cat. 20.3 animus ausus est ... facinus incipere; in Senecan drama, cf. Troad. 945, Phaedr. 448.

155f. toto impetu,/ toto dolore, uiribus totis

The repetition of toto (with variation) is emphatic. The implication, made explicit in 157f., is that although Oedipus' dextra did a good job previously, it was not operating with maximum efficiency, which Oedipus now calls upon it to do. The chiasmus toto dolore, uiribus totis is probably due to metrical rather than rhetorical considerations: totis uiribus would have resulted in the occurrence of a spondee in the fourth foot.

155. dextra

See on 51 for the significance of the manus/dextra word motif.

155ff. By presenting Oedipus' plan for his own destruction as an apostrophe to the murder weapon, his hand, Seneca makes the horror of the situation still more vivid. The directness and urgency of the imperatives ueni (156), exige (158), effringe (159), euelle (160) is compelling.

157. non destino unum uulneri nostro locum

I.e. as he did previously when he tore out his eyes.

157f. **non destino./.. exige**

Oedipus is, with macabre generosity, allowing his hand to deliver its death-dealing blow in whatever part of his body it wants, since his whole being has been polluted (totus nocens sum) by his parricide and incest.

158. **mortem exige**

Poenas/supplicia exigo (see also 171 debitum ... exige) is a common expression, but mortem exigo is rare, being found elsewhere in classical Latin only in Quint. Decl. 305.1 (ed. Winterbottom) and Sen. Ep. 114.5 (quoting Maecenas).

159ff. This sort of violent description is one of the much-criticized hallmarks, probably influenced by declamation (see Bonner, Roman Declamation., 59, 165), of Senecan drama (cf. Phaedr. 1093ff., Oedip. 961ff., Thyest. 760ff.; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1224f.), the type of thing that Lucas (Seneca and Elizabethan Trag., 63) called 'tasteless barbarism'. What critics tend to ignore, however, is the fact that Seneca's goriness is always laced with wit. The wit here consists in seeing the different organs and parts of the body as so many channels for the extraction of Oedipus' life-breath, and in having Oedipus plan for himself the savage forms of death which speakers wish on others in the literature of invective (cf. Ov. Ib. passim).

On a structural level, this passage prepares for Oedipus' prophecy of the coming battle between his sons (271ff.) and for his explanation ideoque leti quaero maturam uiam/ morique propero (304f.). The exceptional savagery of these lines makes one feel that there must be more to Oedipus' anguish than continued guilt for a crime committed long ago. That this is so, is borne out by Antigone in her next speech, when, puzzled by the violence of her father's libido moriendi,

she asks quod te efferarit, quod nouos suffixerit/ stimulos dolori? (206f.)

159. pectus

All the MSS have corpus, which Heinsius emended to pectus, probably correctly. The corruption could easily have occurred because of the proximity of corque, and pectus fits better into the context than does corpus: in order to tear out someone's heart, one would need to break open his chest, not crush his body. See also Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 119.

effringe pectus

For the rare use of effringo with a part of the body, see Verg. Aen. 5.480 effractoque inlisit in ossa crebro; also Ps. Quint. Decl. 8.15,19.7; Stat. Theb. 6.811, 8.760.

scelerum capax

For the expression, see Sen. Oedip. 930, where Cithaeron is described as scelerum capax, also Ps. Quint. Decl. 11.11; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1419; [Sen.] Oct. 153.

160. sinus

Sinus, prominently placed, increases the ugliness of the idea. Without it, one could pass fairly impassively over uiscera, that word which vaguely indicates the internal organs but which need have no gory connotations, but sinus forces upon one a detailed visual image of the actual recesses of the human innards.

161. **incitatis ictibus**

Incitatis could here refer either to the speed and frequency of the blows (cf. Cic. Rep. 6.19 hic uero tantus est totius mundi incitatissima conversione sonitus; Sen. QN. 7.7.1 si uento inciperet, [cometes] cresceret uento eoque esset ardentior quo ille incitatior, Phaedr. 1236 haec incitatis membra turbinibus ferat) or to their savagery (cf. Cic. Att. 2.24.1 Quas Numestio litteras dedi, sic te iis euocabam, ut nihil acrius neque incitatius fieri posset).

guttur

Guttur refers here not only to the throat, but to the whole neck, i.e. both internal and external, as commonly in accounts of deaths by injury to this part; cf. Verg. Aen. 7.533, 8.261; Hor. Epod. 3.2; Ov. Met. 3.90; Sen. Herc. Fur. 221; Sil. 5.541 (TLL 6.2376. 74ff.).

162. **laceraeque fixis unguibus uenae fluant**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 978f. lacerum caput/largum reuulsis sanguinem uenis uomit.

fixis

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 967f. Figo is commonly used, as here, of the action of a sharp implement (OLD figo 16); Miller well translates fixis as 'gouging'.

163. **iras**

Iras suggests that Oedipus, with his libido moriendi, is the very antithesis of the Stoic sage in whom ratio predominates (but see on 164 rescissa); elsewhere Seneca declares ira to be affectum ... maxime

ex omnibus taetrum ac rabidum because, unlike the other emotions, it is entirely violent (Ira 1.1), and he agrees (Ira 1.2) with Horace, who in Ep. 1.2.62 writes, ira furor brevis est.

On the plural form see Fitch on Herc. Fur. 28 who notes that Seneca, like Vergil, usually uses the plural in the accusative, whereas Ovid prefers the singular.

haec uulnera

Not plural for singular, but a reference to Oedipus' two empty eye-sockets.

164. **rescissa**

Rescissa (= 'torn open again'; cf. Phoen. 226 where rescindo means only 'tear away'), like nuda (154) and extrahe (see on 165), recalls the suicide of Cato, who, having wounded himself with his sword and been bound up by doctors, is said by Seneca to have sibi iratus nudas in uulnus manus egit and thus effected his death (Sen. Ep. 24.6-8). Seneca extolls Cato's courage and in no way condemns his ira, which raises the question of whether he intended these lines of Phoen., so reminiscent of Cato's suicide, to evoke only horror or whether we are meant to admire Oedipus' bravery. It would seem, in fact, that the implicit comparison between Oedipus and Cato serves to highlight the crucial difference between them: Cato, Seneca tells us, planned his suicide calmly and rationally, having assessed his situation carefully, and there is no suggestion that his ira, mentioned only at the last, affected his judgement; Oedipus, however, is clearly driven by his ira and reason plays little part in his desire for death, which is the libido moriendi condemned elsewhere by Seneca (see on 77ff.).

tabe

Tabes here is little more than a synonym for sanguis, as in [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 716, 1194 (it may, perhaps, carry an additional hint of 'festering', OLD tabes 2a), although elsewhere in Senecan drama it has the sense of 'wasting away' (so Med. 641); cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 738 where it means 'poison'.

inriga

Inrigo is used of tears and blood only in Senecan drama; cf. Troad. 965, Phaedr. 382, Thyest. 44 (and see Tarrant ad loc.).

165. **hac extrahe animam duram**

Extrahe is a reminder of the Stoics' conception of the soul as material.

For the sense of duram, see on 113.

For the idea, cf. Sen. Ep 70.19 [Catone]... qui quam ferro non emiserat animam, manu extraxit, Prou. 2.11 illam sanctissimam animam indignamque, quae ferro contaminaretur, manu educit (also of Cato).

inexpugnabilem

This is the only occurrence of inexpugnabilis in Senecan drama. The primary meaning of the word concerns war and is 'invincible', 'unassailable', but it is also found, as here, used metaphorically of the human spirit; cf., e.g., Liv. 33.17.9; Ov. Met. 11.767, Trist. 4.10.65 (TLL 7.1331.35ff.). This, however, appears to be the only case where inexpugnabilis has a negative sense (i.e. because Oedipus wants to die).

166ff. et tu parens/ ... debitum tantum exige

A solemn invocation, modelled on prayers addressed to gods wherever they may be or whichever cult centre they may currently be occupying (see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od. 1.30.1). In prayers, as here, also, much parenthetic matter may intervene between the initial vocative and the actual request - twenty-five lines in the case of Lucr. 1.1-28. Cf. Sen. Phaedr. 663f. Te te, soror, quacumque siderei poli/ in parte fulges, inuoco ad causam parem.

167. hoc tantum scelus

I.e. Oedipus' parricide.

167ff. non ego ... umquam

The hyperbaton in this sentence allows emphasis to fall on the key words ulla, satis and especially umquam. Ulla ... umquam, the double indefinite, is also emphatic (cf. 152 nemo non). Cf. with this sentiment Oedipus' satisfaction with his self-blinding in Sen. Oedip. 998f.

169. ista morte

On the superiority of the MS reading, morte, to Gronovius' nocte, which is essentially a gloss on morte, see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 119f.

170f. nec me redemi parte : membratim tibi/perire uolui

By the metaphor from debt-repayment (redemi), Seneca, with macabre wit, represents Oedipus' self-blinding (parte refers to his eyes) as being the payment of the first instalment of his limb-by-limb suicide.

For membratim used of a gradual death, see Lucr. 3.526f. hominem ... cernimus/... membratim uitalem deperdere sensum; Sen. Ep. 101.14 Inuenitur aliquis, qui uelit inter supplicia tabescere et perire membratim....

172. **nunc soluo peonas, tunc tibi inferias dedi**

Nunc and tunc, with tunc coming immediately after the caesura, stress the opposition of the two clauses (see also 174ff. timida tunc/ .../haeret etiamnunc). The grim metaphor contained in tunc tibi inferias dedi, where Oedipus' action of gouging out his eyes is compared to the pious custom of making offerings (e.g. of wine, milk, flowers) to the dead - is in keeping with the macabre wit of the passage as a whole. Cf. 92f., where Oedipus describes his self-blinding as expiation for his crime against his mother.

173f. **ades/ ... /magisque merge**

The exaggerated image of a Laius, eager for vengeance, forcing Oedipus' reluctant hand back into his eye-sockets verges on absurdity; cf. Oedipus' notorious utterance at Oedip. 1051 siste, ne in matrem incidas.

174. **magisque merge**

For mergo of weapons entering the body, see Ov. Met. 3.249; Sen. Agam. 973, Ep. 70.26; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 992; Luc. 3.435. For mergo with a comparative, see Sen. QN. 4.13.6, Ep. 53.7; Plin. HN. 9.109.

tunc

The MSS have tum, but Leo's emendation is probably correct in view of

tunc in 172 and nunc in 176, with which tunc would contrast more effectively than tum. Paleographically the corruption is easy to explain; it may also have been influenced by the tim- in timida.

174f. timida tunc paruo caput/ libauit haustu

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 978f. rigat ora foedus imber et lacerum caput/largum reuulsis sanguinem uenis uomit.

175. libauit

For libo used in a context of injuring or doing violence, cf. only Stat. Theb. 8.527f. paulumque umeri libare sinistri/praebuit; Ilias Latina 608 ensis ... exiguo ceruicem uulnere libat. The metaphor is an extension of the one contained in tunc tibi inferias dedi (172): the blood from Oedipus' eyes is compared to the drink-offerings that were traditionally poured on the tomb of a dead relative or friend. Libo can, and may here, also suggest the idea of beginning an action, or of doing something lightly or half-heartedly; cf. Lucr. 3.716 partibus amissis quoniam libata [anima] recessit (OLD libo 6).

uixque

Vix gains emphasis from the fact that it is separated from eduxit, on which it depends, by cupientes sequi.

175f. uixque cupientes sequi/eduxit oculos

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 962ff. at contra truces/ oculi steterunt et suam intenti manum/ ultro insecuntur, uulneri occurrunt suo.

176f. haeret ../. animus

On the combination, see Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 419.

176ff. haeret etiamnunc mihi/ ... /pressere uultus

Oedipus' sudden swing from determination to timidity and self-doubt is very Senecan; cf. Med. 893-95, Oedip. 930ff., Thyest. 281ff.; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 305-10.

178. Oedipu

Schmidt's conjecture, Oedipus, was generally accepted by earlier editors (E - I use Giardina's symbols - reads oedippum, C and Q^2 edippum or edipum, P has edippu (-us according to Viansino), and, according to Giardina, S has -e in an erasure). Courtney (CR 84 (1970), 199f.) has argued convincingly in favour of the form Oedipu (not known before Giardina's edition) that Seneca would have known the Greek form Οἰδίπου and that there is an exact parallel in Latin in Melampu (Stat. Theb. 3.546, 573). See also Zwierlein, Philologus 113 (1969), 258.

The use of Oedipus' name here serves two purposes: firstly, it marks the transition between Oedipus' address to Laius and his address to himself; secondly, it indicates Oedipus' self-aggression - the use of the name here, as in a quarrel between people, becomes an instrument of attack.

179. eruisti

For eruo used with reference to the eyes, see Ov. Met. 12.268f. figitur hinc duplici Gryneus in lumina ramo/eruiturque oculos; also

Sen. Contr. 1.4.10, 7.4.2; Plin. HN. 11.149; Mart. 3.92.2; Suet. Nero 5.1 (further examples in TLL 5.845.40ff.).

179f. **minus eruisti lumina audacter tua,/quam praestitisti**

A puzzling conceit. Seneca must mean that, when Oedipus drove his fingers into his eye-sockets, he gave an impression of boldness, which was belied by the fact that he did not plunge them deep enough to kill himself. Cf. Hirschberg ad loc.

180. **indue**

For induo with the sense of 'thrust into', see Sen. Herc. Fur. 1028 pectori en tela indue (Fitch's reading) and 1312 and Fitch's commentary ad loc.

181. **coepi**

On the change from second to first person singular, see Zwierlein, Gnomon 38 (1966), 683; Axelson, Korruptelenkult, 9 n.3, commenting on [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1983ff., cites Thyest. 242f. and Oedip. 35f. as parallel cases. See also Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 120 on Med. 905.

qua coepi mori

Cf. Luc. 3.690 qua coepere mori. Seneca here returns to his image of the 'living death' of Oedipus (see on 98).

182ff. Antigone's speech is a miniature suasoria, which divides into three

sections: a) introduction and argument that a man of true uirtus (like Oedipus) should be indifferent to death (182-99); b) there is no need for Oedipus to kill himself since he is blameless (200-205); c) Oedipus has isolated himself so completely that he has already escaped from the world and there is therefore no need for him to commit suicide (205-15). The style of the last section is particularly declamatory, with its series of rhetorical questions and answers. It is striking that in this speech of only thirty-four lines, Antigone no fewer than four times uses a family term with which to address Oedipus: parens (182), pater (190), genitor (204, 215). Were Antigone and Oedipus members of a conventional family, there would be nothing remarkable in this: in a situation where one person is trying to obtain something from another, the former tends to use the name of the latter frequently as a means of stressing the relationship, whether real or imaginary, between them (this is a cornerstone of sales technique). But in this context, in which unnatural family relationships are at the heart and core of the drama, Antigone's repeated use of family terms serves as a reminder of the genetic chaos for which Oedipus is responsible, so that, while on one level she is trying to persuade Oedipus that he is not guilty, on another level her words emphasise the reality of the incestuous tangle which he has caused. In 204, where genitor and insontem are juxtaposed, this is particularly marked. One may note also natae (183) which reinforces the effect of parens (182) (cf. 1ff. parentis ... patris ... nata ... patrem). This is the only time that Antigone refers to herself as Oedipus' daughter. On the significance of the avoidance of personal names in Sen. Phoen., see on 2 (nata).

182. **magnanime**

Magnanimus (= μεγάθυμος in Homer, Hesiod and Apollonius) is a

conventional epic epithet used of kings, heroes and sometimes whole nations (OLD magnanimus a). It occurs in Senecan drama also in Oedip. 294 (used of Oedipus), Herc. Fur. 310 (used of Theseus), Phaedr. 869 (used of Theseus). Although its use here may appear to the audience to be ironical, since Oedipus' recent hysterical behaviour would hardly appear to justify the heroic epithet, it is probably intended by Antigone to be hortatory: by calling Oedipus magnanime, Antigone is reminding him that he is a hero and that he should act accordingly.

Pauca, o parens magnanime, miserandae precor

By hyperbaton, Seneca achieves this strikingly alliterative line, which creates a dramatic opening for Antigone's speech. One may note that alliteration occurs more frequently with the letter p than with any other (Bonner, Roman Declamation, 66), which suggests that it was regarded as being particularly effective. The vocative, as frequently, has the effect of stressing the word which precedes it (cf. 204, 215, 288).

184. **ueteris**

Vetus here has the sense of 'past' (OLD uetus 5) rather than of 'ancient' as commonly, since it is not the antiquity of the Theban royal residence that is of importance in this context, but the fact that it was formerly the home of Oedipus.

speciem

Here = 'splendour'; for this use of species, more common in prose than in poetry, see also, e.g., Cic. Fam. 1.9.17; Hor. Ep. 1.6.49; Liv. 9.40.15; Tac. Ann. 15.9 (OLD species 4a).

185. **habitumque regni flore pollentem inclito**

Here, as at 54 and 209, Antigone mentions the prosperity and power of the kingdom of Thebes. In all three cases, Seneca uses the conventional idea of the wealth and strength of a king's realm for a rhetorical purpose: in the first instance (54), it indicates the extent of Antigone's filial devotion; in 209, as here, it serves as a reminder of the extent to which the fortunes of Oedipus have changed, and here, in addition, it is intended to encourage Oedipus to remember his former position and to act accordingly (see on 182 magnanime).

flore ... inclito

For this combination, see also Sen. Med. 226 and Costa's commentary ad loc.

186. **aut**

Aut instead of neque is found in both poetry and prose, when aut functions as a connective between individual words rather than between clauses (OLD aut 5a; K-S 2. 103), but aut instead of neque, when aut introduces a clause, occurs only occasionally and only in poetry; cf., e.g., Verg. Aen. 4.337ff. neque ego hanc abscondere furto/speraui (ne finge) fugam, nec coniugis umquam/praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera ueni; Prop. 4.1.103ff. hoc neque harenosum Libyae Iovis explicat antrum,/aut sibi commissos fibra locuta deos,/aut si quis motas cornicis senserit alas; Luc. 1.286f. nunc neque te longi remeantem pompa triumphi/excipit aut sacras poscunt Capitolia laurus; for non ... aut (=neque), as here, cf. Verg. Aen. 11.736f. (K-S 2. 104).

iras

See on 163.

ipsa

Ipse occurs fairly commonly in negative sentences with the sense of 'even'; see, e.g., Cic. Agr. 3.8 hoc Valeria lex non dicit, Corneliae leges non sanciunt, Sulla ipse non postulat; Prop. 4.9.44 non clausisset aquas ipsa noverca suas (TLL 7.349.36ff.). Ipse is used with this sense in Senecan drama also in Troad. 875; Phaedr. 717; see also [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1366, 1385.

mora

On the lapse of time between the anagnorisis and Oedipus' self-exile, see Intro., 33, 38.

186f. [non] peto aut ut iras, temporum haut ipsa more/fractas ... feras

This is a variation on the standard plea for restraint made to the protagonist by the Nurse or confidant; cf. Sen. Agam. 203f., 224f. (Nurse); Herc Fur. 1274ff. (Theseus); Med. 157f., 381, 425f. (Nurse); Phaedr. 255f. (Nurse); [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 927f. (Nurse). Antigone says that she will not ask Oedipus to restrain his passion, and then proceeds in a roundabout way to do just that.

Antigone's words, iras, temporum haut mora fractas, do not imply that Oedipus' anguish and mad longing for death have been constantly raging since he learnt of his crimes - 205ff. makes it clear that this is not the case - but that his guilt and self-loathing, having burst forth again, are as strong now as they were then, despite the passage of time.

For the expression iras ... fractas, see Sen. Clem. 1.19.4 Utinam quidem eadem homini lex esset et ira cum telo suo frangeretur, 2.5.5 sed omnem fortunae iram reuerberabit et ante se frangit; also Stat. Theb. 8.535; Aur. Vict. Orig. 16.3.

187. **remisso pectore et placido**

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 219 remisso lumine ac placido. For the expression pectore placido, see Verg. Aen. 1.521.

188. **at**

The MSS have et, which Richter emended to at, correctly, since a connective with adversative force is clearly demanded by the context: Antigone says 'I do not ask you to resume your kingly position nor to moderate your anger, but merely not to show weakness'; cf., e.g., Ter. And. 679 parum succedit quod ago; at facio sedulo; Cic. Clu. 42 erat huic inimicus Oppianicus, erat, sed tamen erat uitricus; crudelis et huic infesta mater, at mater (K-S 2.82f., who, however, incorrectly classify this use of at as concessive).

at hoc decebat

The imperfect, decebat, is puzzling, but probably (although decet is not one of the standard verbs listed in L-H-S 2.327f.) illustrates the Latin preference for the indicative, rather than the subjunctive, with a modal verb, i.e. decebat means 'it would be fitting'; cf. Lucr. 1.885ff. consimili ratione herbas quoque saepe decebat/et laticis dulcis guttas similique sapore/mittere; Sen. Clem. 2.1.4 Nunc profecto consentire decebat ad aequum bonumque; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1134f. nunc, pater, caecum chaos/reddi decebat. (K-S 1.171 gives decebat (without examples) as meaning 'es würde sich geziemt haben', which does not

apply to any of the instances of decebat cited above.)

188ff. Antigone here takes up where she left off at 77-9; she states her argument once more in not dissimilar language - Oedipus' robur is common to both passages, as is his being uictum malis - but this time she proceeds to explain why Oedipus, despite his suffering, should not turn to death as an escape from his troubles (193-96). In so doing, she flatteringly assimilates Oedipus to the Stoic sage, who triumphs over adversity (qui fata proculcauit 193; see Sen. Prou. 4) until his indifference to the vicissitudes of Fortune makes him invulnerable to them (Sen. Prou. 4.12f.). There is thus no need for such a man to desire death, according to Antigone (but not to the Stoics; see on 79ff.), since the conditions of his life do not trouble him. It is noteworthy that malis (191), implying Oedipus' parricide and incest, and bona (193), which is probably a reference to Oedipus' kingly status with all its attendant advantages, are terms which are common in Stoic language, but which are used here in an un-Stoic sense. Thus Antigone's general argument that suicide shows weakness might also be seen as flawed. (see on 197f.).

190f. **non est, ut putas, uirtus, pater/timere uitam**

Antigone here deliberately uses Oedipus' technique of dissuasion against him; see 97f. where Oedipus says to Antigone, peccas honesta mente, pietatem vocas/ patrem insepultum trahere. This is an example of the linguistic and stylistic links which exist between speeches, which may, on the surface, appear to be virtually unconnected. Seneca's word order here is significant: the family term, pater, is given prominence by its position at the end of the line (see on

182ff.). The apostrophe, ut putas, causes stress to fall on uirtus, that key-word in Stoic philosophy. Timere too is given weight by its position as the first word in the line: timor, being irrational, is opposed to the Stoic ideal of uirtus based on ratio, and thus a man who committed suicide because he feared life would not be acting in accordance with Stoic precepts - although his decision might be the correct one, it would be a case of 'doing the right deed for the wrong reason'. Timor/odium uitae and libido moriendi are two sides of the same coin, and both are condemned elsewhere by Seneca (see Ep. 4.4, Ep. 24.25f., Ep. 30.15; Tranq. 2.14f.).

192. **se uertere ac retro dare**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 86 where Jocasta says to Oedipus, haud est uirile terga Fortunae dare; also Herc. Fur. 1275ff.

proculcauit

For the figurative use of proculco, cf. Tac. Hist. 1.40; Suet. Vesp. 5.3.

194. **proiecit atque abscidit**

An example of hysteron-proteron, with the more important word, proiecit, which should logically follow abscidit, being brought forward to a prominent position at the beginning of the line, cf. Verg. Aen. 2.353 moriamur et in media arma ruamus; Hor. Sat. 2.3.293f. aegrum ... mater delira necabit/ in gelida fixum ripa febremque reducet.

casus

Antigone's use of casus is indicative of her attitude, expressed openly in 203ff., that Oedipus is innocent, since casus in Roman law and in rhetoric was opposed to dolus and was not punishable (see Cic. Planc. 35 nullum crimen est in casu; Her. 2.24 utrum casu nescierit an culpa; Liv. 25.3.10 ea ipsa ... fraude ipsorum facta erant non casu).

194f. **et casus suos/onerauit ipse**

Oedipus himself - ipse is emphatic - has added to his troubles by his self-mutilation. Onero here does not simply mean 'heap up', as it usually does, but rather it has the sense 'aggravate' cf., e.g., Liv. 6.11.9 bellum ... graue per se, oneratum Latinorum ... defectione; Tac. Ann. 1.69 accendebat haec [viz. Tiberius' suspicions] onerabatque Seianus (OLD onero 8).

195. **deo nullo**

The gods are seen here as providers of material benefits, each responsible for a different province.

For the notion of a hero dispensing with divine aid, cf. S. Aj. 766ff. See further Hirschberg ad loc.

196. **cupiat**

Lipsius' conjecture, fugiat, is attractive, because the resultant antithesis with petat gives improved sense. It is a commonplace and needs no argument that to flee death is cowardice; for her paradoxical claim that it is equally a mark of cowardice to seek death, Antigone produces the specious argument that to desire death is to fail to treat it with the indifference which courage requires (197f.). 196 would thus be a paratactic way of expressing the thought 'would no

more have a motive for seeking death than for shunning it' (for such parataxis, see Hor. Od. 1.6.4 and Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc.). However, cupiat, on which there is MS consensus, does make sense and cupiat ... petat is not repetitive - Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 120) cites Gronovius and Ascensius who distinguished between cupiat as a passive desire (= 'desire') and petat which implies action (='actively seek'). Furthermore, the change from fugiat to cupiat could not easily be ascribed to scribal error, but would have to be put down to editorial intervention.

197. **contempsit mori**

Mori here = mortem. Seneca is fond of using the infinitive as a substantive; see Summers (Select Letters), lxiv-lxv.

197f. **nemo contempsit mori/ qui concupiuit**

The repetition of the prefix con- gives force to the antithesis in the sententia. Indifference to death is a constantly recurring theme in Seneca's prose writings (see, e.g.; Prou. 6.6; Ep. 75.14, 23.4, 24.6ff., 36.8ff, 98.16; QN. 2.59.3f.; also Herc. Fur. 612). For the most part, Seneca was concerned to advise and instruct against fear of death (see Griffin, Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics, 384ff.), but in Ep. 24.24f. he deals with the problem of the libido moriendi, which, like fear of death, is condemned as being contrary to ratio (see on 77ff.).

cuius haut ./.. tuto est situs

This is a neat sententia, though hardly a convincing argument against suicide, since clearly Oedipus' situation could become worse. The sententia seems to function here more on the level of rhetoric than on the level of sense: it serves to round off the first section of Antigone's speech and to introduce the second (200ff.). On this 'terminal' function of the sententia as a unit of division, separating speeches or sections within speeches, see Tarrant (Sen. Agam., 159f.). For other examples of this type of climactic sententia in Sen. Phoen., see, e.g., 80 tantis in malis uinci mori est, which completes Antigone's first speech; 151-53, a series of three sententiae on the ubiquity of death, which conclude Oedipus' declaration of his determination to die by whatever means, after which his attention turns to the destructive power of his hands and his affectus increases sharply; 386, which ends Jocasta's first speech; 598 which concludes Polyneices' speech; 630ff., which completes Jocasta's observations on the uncertainty of the fortunes of war, after which she moves to point out the guilt which Polyneices would incur.

200. uelle fac

For the expression uelle fac which does not occur elsewhere in Seneca's writings, cf. Verg. Aen. 4.540 quis me autem, fac uelle, sinet ...?; Stat. Theb. 2.449; also Sen. Ep. 107.11 (perhaps quoting Cleanthes) fac nolle.

202. ut esse te putes dignum nece

Cf. Sen. Phaedr. 256f. where the Nurse says to Phaedra dignam ob hoc

uita reor/quod esse temet autumas dignam nece.

203ff. Antigone's insistence on Oedipus' innocence contrasts sharply with Oedipus' strong sense of guilt, expressed throughout this first fragment. One can compare [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 884ff., where the Nurse tries to dissuade Deineira from suicide by insisting that her 'crime' was no more than an error, and Sen. Herc. Fur. 1237f., where Amphitryon uses the same argument against Hercules. Antigone does not use the words scelus and error, nor is the question of guilt vs. innocence directly debated between her and Oedipus, but the situation here is nevertheless analogous to that found in the abovementioned plays. In each, a kinsman insists that the offender's action was an involuntary one caused by Fate/Fortune and therefore one for which the offender need feel no guilt, and the offender persists in seeing his/her deed as a scelus. Clearly, what the well-meaning kinsmen understand by scelus is very different from the offenders' view of it: to the former, who operate legalistically and rationally, a scelus is a voluntary wrong, whereas for the offenders who take a religious and moralistic perspective, it has nothing to do with the voluntariness or involuntariness of their actions - their actions may have been predestined, but they nevertheless feel polluted by them, hence they see them as scelera. (See Zwierlein's full discussion in Senecas Hercules im Lichte, 35ff.).

Pack (TAPhA 71 (1940), 376f.) notes that the sense which the three kinsmen give to error and scelus is part of a rhetorical formula; he cites as examples of parallel usage Cic. Marcell. 13 Omnes enim qui ad illa arma fata sumus nescio quo rei publicae misero funestoque compulsi, etsi aliqua culpa tenemur erroris humani, ab scelere certe

liberati sumus; Ov. Trist. 3.6.25f. idque ita, si nullum scelus est in pectore nostro,/principiumque mei criminis error habet; also Cic. Lig. 17; Ov. Trist. 3.11.33f., 4.10.89f., Met. 3.141f.; Sen. Contr. 4.3. See also on 451ff.

203. hoc

Hoc here = 'this ... of yours'; see 61 and note ad loc. For attingo used in connection with the senses or feelings, cf., e.g., Plaut. Merc. 18ff. elegantia ... quemque attingit; Cic. Att. 9.11A.2 cura te attigit; Val. Max 8.12.ext.1 pectus ... cogitatis attigit. (TLL 2. 1144. 77ff.).

204. te ... uoca

For uoco used reflexively with an adjective, see Quint. Inst. 11.1.21 si abundans opibus pauperem se ... uocet; cf. Tac. Ann. 4.17 qui se partium Agrippinae uocent.

205. quoque

For this use of quoque as an intensifying word (= 'even'), see, e.g., Cic. Quinct. 49 mors honesta saepe uitam quoque turpem exornat; Verg. Ecl. 9.51 omnia fert aetas, animum quoque (OLD quoque 4a). (K-S 2.51).

dis inuitis

The confusion between inuitus and inuisus occurs also in Med. 952 and 991 and there, as here, inuitus is clearly the correct reading

since the expression dis inuitis is so common as to be almost proverbial; see, e.g., Cic. Verr. 2.1.9; Catull. 76.12; Verg. Aen. 2.402 (inuitis ... diuis); Manil. 1.29 (TLL 7.235.3ff.). The meaning of dis inuitis is that Oedipus is innocent although even the gods desire his guilt. Apollo's prediction is taken to express his will and not merely his foreknowledge.

quid est

The strong sense-pause after the fifth foot is uncommon in Senecan drama (see Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 373); in Phoen., apart from this instance, it occurs only at 234.

205ff. The string of rhetorical questions (cf., e.g., Sen. Troad. 814ff., Thyest. 802ff.; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1234ff.), broken by a few answers, rises to a climax with the final question, quem, genitor, fugis? (215). The repetition of quid and quod in quick succession (205ff.) gives a staccato urgency to Antigone's interrogation. The momentum slows with ut careas die (208ff.) and the beginning of the question-answer series; Antigone is no longer simply throwing out questions at random, she has collected herself to consider more closely the possible reason for Oedipus' behaviour, and her questions become more searching as she puts forward reason after reason, culminating in her final desperate cry. The introduction of answers into the series of questions gives Seneca the opportunity for some emphatic repetition, so careas ... cares (208f.), patriamque ... patria (210). Antigone's final question as to whom Oedipus is fleeing, gains impact by contrast with her preceding inquiries as to what Oedipus is fleeing (211ff.).

206. nouos

A key-word which indicates that Oedipus has not been in a state of frenzy ever since he learnt the truth about his crimes, but that something has recently revived his anguish. It prepares for the eruption of the theme of the fraternal conflict in 273ff.

efferarit

On the origin and use of the verb, see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 76f. para. 164.

206f. **suffixerit/stimulos dolori**

Seneca here reverses the usual form of the metaphor; see Liv. 1.40.4 sed et iniuriae dolor in Tarquinium ipsum ... stimulabat; Sen. Ep. 70.25 ubi ... stimulos adegit dolor; Sil. 6.256f. nec frustra rapidi, stimulante dolore, fuisset/impetus.

208ff. This is a witty inversion of the common rhetorical figure in which a speaker asks 'whither can I fly?', and lists, in the form of questions, a list of possible destinations, each of which is rejected (see Sen. Med. 451ff.; Herc. Fur. 1321ff and Hollis on Ov. Met. 8.133). Here, instead of listing destinations for flight and showing each to be impossible, Antigone lists different items from which Oedipus wishes to flee, and shows that in each case his wish has already been granted.

208f. **ut careas die?/cares;**

Careo die is an adaptation by Seneca, metri gratia, of the conventional periphrasis for death, careo luce (see Cic. Tusc. 1.12; Verg. Georg. 4.472; Ov. Met. 14.725; Sen. Med. 549, Troad. 603). There is some play on the literal sense of the expression and its figurative meaning: in her question, Antigone clearly uses careo die figuratively, whereas in her response she refers quite literally to the fact that Oedipus is 'without light' because of his blindness. Implicit in this word-play is the idea, recurrent in this first section of the play (see on 98ff.) that Oedipus' existence is a 'living death'.

209. **altis nobilem muris domum**

See on 185.

210. **patria tibi uiuo perit**

Tibi uiuo is a dative of reference with overtones of the dative of separation; cf., e.g., Liv. 39.18.1 multis actiones et res peribant; Quint. Inst.. 1.10.44 quidquid formae quadrati detraxeris, amplitudini quoque peribit (OLD perio 1b). This is the most striking example in Phoen. of antithesis resulting from the immediate juxtaposition of single words of opposite meaning; other examples occur at 17 (sorores mater), 65 (duobus omnis).

211. **natos fugis matremque**

Again, Ismene's existence seems to be ignored, unless one is to assume, for no good reason, that natos refers to Ismene as well as

to the brothers. Matrem is highly ambiguous: Antigone obviously uses mater to refer to Jocasta as the mother of Eteocles and Polyneices, but it could equally apply to Jocasta as the mother of Oedipus himself. The ambiguity is increased by the word-order: because fugio precedes rather than follows matremque, natos fugis stands as a unit, with matrem added on as a separate unit. The ambiguity is in keeping with the nature of this speech, in which Antigone's intention and the effect of her words are two different things (see on 182ff.).

For the idea, here ironically inverted, that separation from one's wife and children is death's cruellest blow, see Lucr. 3. 894ff.

211f. ab aspectu omnium/fortuna te summovit

Fortuna here = 'good fortune'. It is a paradox that separation from family, country and the light of day, which would normally be regarded as a disaster, is for Oedipus a stroke of fortune.

213. tibi hoc uita abstulit

The position of tibi, at the beginning of its clause is emphatic: Antigone is stressing the paradox of Oedipus' situation, in that, in his case, life has taken from him what it is usually left to death to take.

Drexler (Einführing in die Römische Metrik, 136) observes that this verse is metrically unique among Senecan trimeters because of the syntactical break after a monosyllable (mors) following the caesura in the third foot.

214. turba fortunae prior

Hypallage for turba fortunae prioris, although prior should perhaps be understood with turba as well. See Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 255 where, likewise, the epithet may be connected with two nouns.

215. iussa

Iussa is given weight by its position at the end of the sentence. Antigone is making it clear that Oedipus' state of isolation is of his own making; his followers did not leave him of their own accord, but because Oedipus ordered them to do so.

quem, genitor, fugis?

This is the climax of Antigone's speech: Oedipus has already escaped from everything he could possibly fear; from whom, then, is he still fleeing? Antigone's question is given additional urgency by the inclusion of genitor, with which she tries to force a response from Oedipus by a direct appeal to their kinship (see also on 182ff.).

216. omnium

= 'all my'; so consuming to Oedipus' sense of pollution that his two crimes, parricide and incest, are multiplied in his mind: cf. 158 totus nocens sum.

216ff. This speech falls into three sections: 216-40 in which Oedipus, seized by an overwhelming sense of pollution (216-25) desires first the destruction of his sense of hearing so that he may be completely

isolated (226-33) and then, as though rejecting this as a half-measure, returns to his longing for death since he has nothing left to live for (234-40). At this point Antigone should be thought of as trying to restrain Oedipus, whereupon he waves her off (241-42) before embarking on the second part of his speech (243-73) in which he gives his own twisted version (see on 243ff.) of his history, concluding, with reference to his incestuous marriage with his mother and to the children born of that union: nullum crimen hoc maius potest/natura ferre (272f.). This prompts the thought: si quod etiamnum est tamen,/qui facere possent dedimus (273f.), which ushers in the third and most detailed mention so far (see on 273ff.) in the 'crescendo of reference' to the conflict of the brothers.

216f. me fugio ... /pectus, manumque hanc fugio

See Henry, D. & E., The Mask of Power, 98: 'It is to escape a self-awareness which is nothing but awareness of evil that Oedipus believes he must go back to Cithaeron and "disentangle the monstrosity"'. Oedipus' preoccupation with his guilt and, consequently, with his destiny and his identity is suggested by the insistent use in this act of the pronoun ego, the first-person possessive adjective and of verbs in the first person. These frequently occur in emphatic positions (so, e.g., me in 216) or are repeated (so, e.g., fugio (216, 217, 218) and ego (219, 220, 221, 222, 224)). Henry, D. & E., The Mask of Power, 188 n.17 point out, further, that the first-person possessive is often superfluous for the sense but is used with nouns 'that remind the listener of the unnatural aspects of Oedipus' story' (they cite, among other instances, natus meus (109), in thalamos meos (270), nefas/de more nostro ... meos ... toros (356f.)).

The point about the things which Oedipus wants to escape, as opposed to those listed by Antigone from which he has succeeded in fleeing (209-15) is that they are inescapable - hence his frustration and desperate longing for death.

217ff. hanc (217) ... hoc (217) ... hoc (219) ... has (220)

See on 118ff. Here the deictics are genuine, as possibly in 67ff., whereas in 118ff. they are clearly not.

217. et hoc caelum et deos

Hoc suggests that caelum refers specifically to the light and air of the upper world, the implication being that Oedipus would rather be in Hades. For instances where caelum is explicitly contrasted with the atmosphere of the underworld, see Verg. Georg. 3.417; Stat. Theb. 8.733f., Silu. 5.3.287 (OLD caelum 8). Oedipus' sense of pollution extends beyond himself to include hoc caelum et deos (in terms of sense, hoc applies to deos as well as to caelum : the gods are those of hoc caelum, of the upper world); cf. 8 caelum atque terras. This is not mere rhetorical exaggeration, but a reflection of the Stoic concept of the universe as a unified, animate entity, in which the actions of human beings can have repercussions in the cosmos at large; cf. Sen. Oedip. 36 fecimus caelum nocens. On the Stoic understanding of the unity of the cosmos, see Herington, Arion 5 (1966), 433ff.; Pratt, Seneca's Drama, 46ff.; Regenbogen, 'Schmerz und Tod', 437f.; Sandbach, The Stoics, 75ff.; Edelstein, The Meaning of Stoicism, chap. II; see also Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 1054-62.

218. et dira fugio scelera quae feci innocens

The reading of E, innocens, is obviously correct, since nocens of A makes no sense: even Oedipus, stricken with guilt, could not have considered that he was guilty on the legal level (the implication of nocens) of crimes which he had committed in ignorance (cf. S.OC. 988ff.). The point of the verse seems to be the paradox created between scelera, which implies culpability of some sort, and innocens. Oedipus here rejects Antigone's insistence on his complete innocence (203ff.); he recognizes his legal innocence - hence quae feci innocens - but nevertheless regards his actions as scelera by which he has been polluted. In support of innocens, Zwierlein (Krit. Komm, 122) observes that in 216-18 Oedipus is referring back to Antigone's exhortations in 208ff.: thus fugio conscium scelerum omnium/pectus (216f.) refutes Antigone's insistence nec ulla pectus hoc culpa attigit (203), and scelera quae feci innocens is a response to 204f. et hoc magis te, genitor, insontem uoca,/quod innocens es dis quoque inuitis.

Wilamowitz, followed by Leo and Richter, deleted this verse, but most modern editors have retained it. The strongest argument in favour of deletion would seem to be that the verse repeats what Oedipus has already said in 216f.: fugio conscium scelerum omnium/ pectus, but repetition is so much a feature of Senecan drama that this is hardly compelling. One might add, perhaps, that the verse lacks spontaneity, that it is too obviously a careful refutation of Antigone's argument (203ff.), and that 219 would follow smoothly from 217 were 218 eliminated. None of these arguments, however, is conclusive.

dira ... scelera

On the implications of this phrase, see Hirschberg *ad loc.* who observes that *scelera* here (unlike *scelus* in Cinna frg. 7) refers, not specifically to the offspring of Oedipus' incestuous marriage, but more generally to Oedipus' crimes.

219. **quo**

Quo here = 'to which' (see OLD *quo*[1] 3a), with *solum* = 'surface' (cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.154 *prodit et in summum seminis herba solum*; see also OLD 6a): the image is of corn growing from below the ground to its surface.

Ceres

The gifts of a god/goddess - in this case, wheat, fruit etc. - were commonly designated by the name of the deity who was believed to be responsible for them. For *Ceres* used in this way, cf., e.g., Verg. *Georg.* 1.297, *Aen.* 1.177; Ov. *Met.* 5.655; Sen. *Oedip.* 49 (see TLL Onomasticon 2.342.62ff. for further examples). The saying *sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus* was proverbial (see Otto, *Sprichwörter*, *Venus*).

219f. **frugifera ../. pestifero**

The contrast between the healthy fruitfulness of the earth and Oedipus' tainted state is emphasised by the repetition of *-fera*, *-fero*. Apart from indicating Oedipus' sense of pollution, *pestifero* may contain an allusion to the plague which came upon Thebes as a result of Oedipus' parricide (see Sen. *Oedip.* 630ff.).

ego hoc solum ./.. traho

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1142 quas trahimus auras? quod solum fesso subest?

219ff. ego hoc solum ...

The repetition of ego stresses Oedipus' sense of contamination: 'Do I [who am so polluted] .... See on 216f.

Oedipus has broken the sacred taboos of society by committing the two most heinous crimes, parricide and incest (see 264ff., where he describes his incest as facinus ignotum efferum/ inusitatum ... quod populi horreant and Fantham, 'Incest and Fratricide', 69ff.). Despite his technical innocence, he is morally polluted in the deepest sense, with the result that he feels unworthy not only to live among other people, but even to breathe the same air, tread the same soil etc. as they do (for the cosmic effect of sinfulness, see Sen. Oedip. 36 fecimus caelum nocens and commentary on 217). Cf. Ov. Ib. 107ff., where Ovid prays that nature may withold from his enemy the gifts which Oedipus here wishes to be denied to himself.

221f. ullo fruor almae parentis munere

An example of one of the types of five-word grouping favoured by Seneca - two noun-adjective pairs, one enclosing the other, with a verb included. Canter (Rhetorical Elements, 175) estimates the average occurrence of this kind of grouping as being once in every sixty-four verses.

222. **almae parentis**

Parens here probably refers not to Ceres, specifically the crop-producer, but to Terra, the goddess responsible for everything which the earth produces. Terra is more commonly designated as mater (so, e.g., Liv. 8.6.10; Tac. Ger. 40.2), but cf. Juv. 8.257; App. Met. 6.10. Almus/-a is a conventional epithet of deities (cf., e.g., Verg. Aen. 2.591 where it is used of Venus and 10.252 where it is applied to Cybele).

222ff. **ego castam manum/.../attrecto**

Castus, apart from denoting sexual chastity, can mean 'pure', 'unsullied' in a ritual sense, and attrecto means 'touch', particularly in a religious sense. The implication is that the polluted Oedipus is ritually unclean and is therefore unworthy to touch the pure hand of his daughter (on incest and parricide as religious offences, see Liebeschuetz, Continuity and Change, 41ff.). Attrecto can, however, also have the sense of 'assault sexually' (so Cic. Cael. 20 fore qui dicerent uxores suas ... attrectatas; Suet. Nero 26.2 a quodam ... cuius uxorem attrectauerat); Seneca may here be encouraging an appreciation of its sexual connotation, providing as pointers castam and incestificus. The possibility of Oedipus' having sexual designs on Antigone, perhaps a Senecan innovation, has already been introduced at 48ff. (see also Intro., 48).

223. **nefandus incestificus exsecrabilis**

This line is exceptionally striking: it is the only three-word iambic verse in Senecan drama, it consists solely of adjectives in asyndeton (cf. Phaedr. 939 longinqua clausa abstrusa diuersa inuia;

Herc. Fur. 32 terribile dirum pestilens atrox ferum and see Fitch ad loc. for parallels outside Seneca's plays), and one of these, incestificus (= incestus; see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 39 para. 72) is a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον.

exsecrabilis

Exsecrabilis can have an active sense (= perniciosus, pestifer) (TLL 5.1834.32ff.) or a passive one (= odiosus, inuisus) (TLL 5.1834.44ff.). In this context, where physical contact is mentioned, to ascribe an active meaning to exsecrabilis would be most effective, since it would highlight Oedipus' sense of contagion, creating a climax to the series of epithets. However, exsecrabilis in an active sense is rare and nowhere else is it applied to a person. See Hirschberg ad loc. who takes exsecrabilis to mean 'accursed'. Possibly both senses of exsecrabilis are present here.

On iambic lines in Seneca which end in a word of five syllables, see Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 660; Zwierlein, Prolegomena, 229f.

224. aure concipio sonos

Concipio, when applied to the senses, is more commonly used of visual perception (TLL 4.59.9f.); it occurs with reference to hearing only in Petr. frg. 8 concepit nam terra sonos; App. Mund. 15 obtutus uelocius inlustriora contingit, auditus, dum ad aures uenit, seriore sensu concipitur; Carm. Epigr. 1319.2 et mea post habitum rogantis concipere uerba. The closest parallel to the form of expressions found here, occurs in the post-classical poet Claudian, Carm. Min. 18.8 barbaricos docili concipit aure sonos.

224f. ego ullos ../. parentis nomen aut nati audiam

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 388 mixtumque nomen coniugis gnati patris.

This sentence is ambiguous, since parentis could refer to either of Oedipus' parents as well as to himself, and nati could apply equally to Oedipus and to either of his sons. The ambiguity is probably deliberate, since it reinforcses the effect of incestificus (223), reminding one of the genetic confusion of Oedipus' family. Seneca ironically inverts the traditional attachment of a man to his parents and offspring.

226ff. utinam quidem rescindere ./../eruere possem

The desire of Oedipus to destroy his hearing appears to have its origin in S. OT. 1386ff. (see Intro.,). Seneca expands the Sophoclean version for maximum rhetorical effect. The idea that Oedipus' ability to hear prevents him from achieving the complete isolation which he desires is alluded to also in Sen. Oedip. 1012ff., where Jocasta's address to the now blind Oedipus evokes the response: Quis frui tenebris uetat?/ quis reddit oculos? matris, en matris sonus!/ perdidimus operam.

227. manibus adactis

Adigo is commonly used of a weapon that is driven into a body (OLD adigo 6), but it is not used elsewhere of hands. Seneca here returns to the image of Oedipus' hands as a murder weapon; see 154f. and note on indue (180).

qua

= 'where'(OLD qua 4a). Quo (= 'to which') in A is probably the result of scribal confusion of relative adverbs, or it reflects an attempt by a scribe to correct what was thought to be an error in the gender of a relative pronoun.

meant

For meo used of the passage of voices, cf. Lucr. 1.354; Plin. HN. 11.176.

229f. **nata ./.. pater**

Seneca deliberately uses family terms here in order to reinforce the clause quae pars meorum es criminum: Antigone is part of Oedipus' crimes precisely in that she is his daughter as well as his sister.

231. **inhaeret**

For the use of inhaereo with emotions or ideas, cf. Ov. Met. 7.447; Sen. Ira 1.19.5, Ep. 108.26.

recrudescit

The primary meaning of recrudesco, 're-open', applies to wounds. Here, it refers to Oedipus' sense of guilt which is portrayed as breaking out again, presumably after a period during which it was dormant (see on 206). for a similar use of recrudesco, cf., e.g., Sen. Ep. 56.9 in illa latebra ... interdum recrudescit ambitio (OLD recrudesco 2).

nefas

Nefas here refers to Oedipus' awareness of his crimes, i.e. his guilt, rather than to the crimes themselves. For this use of nefas, see also Sen. Herc. Fur. 1098f. proxima puris/sors est manibus nescire nefas; Phoen. 639; cf. Med. 122, where nefas = 'capacity for crime'.

232. **ingerunt**

Ingero is not used here in its usual sense of 'pour in', 'pile up'; it has a definite hostile nuance, as it does in Sen. Ben. 6.41.2 Quanto melius ac iustius in promptu habere merita amicorum et offerre, non ingerere and Tac. Or. 7.3. quorum nomina prius parentes liberis suis ingerunt?. One might translate it as 'force upon'.

233. **donastis**

Dono (E reads donastis; A has negastis) here = condono as in 456 and Med. 1015 (OLD dono 4). See Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 122.

caput tenebris grave

A clever use by Seneca of a very common form of synecdoche: on the surface, the expression means 'myself, burdened with gloom' (for this use of tenebrae, cf. Lucr. 2.15; Cic. Dom. 10.24, Tusc. 3.34.82), but Oedipus' caput is also literally tenebris grave in that he is blind (for tenebrae used of the darkness resulting from blindness, see Lucr. 3.414; Ov. Met. 3.515; Stat. Theb. 4.407). Tenebris may also carry a suggestion of the darkness of the underworld (cf. umbras 234).

233ff. For wishes for death in Senecan drama, cf. Thyest. 1043f.; Herc. Fur. 1202ff.; Phaedr. 1184ff., 1201ff.; Oedip. 926ff.; cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 844ff.

234. **ad umbras Ditis aeternas**

The reading of E, aeternas, is preferable to the aeterni of A: although the sense would be virtually unaffected by aeterni, in terms of the rhetoric aeternas is more effective, firstly, because it is more direct, and, secondly, because the -as ending adds to the harsh alliterative effect of the sibilants - umbras Ditis aeternas. Also, aeternas results in the elegant positioning of a genitive (Ditis) between a noun and adjective in agreement.

quid hic

On the unusually placed sense-pause, see on 205 quid est.

234f. **quid hic/manes meos detineo**

Cf. Sen. Hec. Fur. 1258 Cur animam in ista luce detineam amplius.

235. **[quid] ... mixtusque superis erro?**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 949ff. quaeratur uia/ qua nec sepultis mixtus et uiuis tamen/exemptus erres.

236. **mixtusque superis**

Misceo is used in a variety of constructions to denote sexual

activity (see Adams, Latin Sexual Vocabulary, 180f. and TLL 8.1081.46ff.); thus, although the perfect participle is not elsewhere attested with this connotation, it may be that Seneca intended a double entendre here: Oedipus is mixtus superis not only in the obvious sense that he is still alive, but also by virtue of his incestuous relationship with his mother.

quid restat mali

Oedipus' question is a bizarre justification of his wish to die, i.e. 'why should I continue to live when there is no more evil left for me to do?' Cf. 48 nullum facere iam possum scelus. For similar revelling in guilt, cf. also Oedipus' words at 305, 331ff.

237. **uirtus**

Virtus is used here in a very general sense. It might best be translated as 'manly worth', which would encompass physical, mental and moral qualities.

237ff. **regnum parentes /.../has quoque eripui mihi**

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 379ff., where likewise there is a catalogue of what Hercules has lost (patrem abstulisti, regna, germanos, larem/ patrium) and a statement that something remains (una res superest mihi), the revelation of which comes as a surprise (odium tui).

238. **ingeni sollertis eximium decus**

I.e. the glory which Oedipus' gained when he outwitted the Sphinx.

239. periere

Perio is used figuratively: Oedipus' kingdom, his children and at least his mother are still alive, although they are dead to him, since he has cut himself off from them.

cuncta sors mihi infesta abstulit

Oedipus, overwhelmed with self-pity, forgets that he abdicated of his own free will (see 105), and that his isolation from Jocasta and his sons was of his own choosing, since there is nowhere any indication that his exile was not self-imposed.

240. **lacrimae supererant: has quoque eripui mihi**

Cf. Sen. Contr. 7.4.9. where an epigram of the rhetorician Festus, based on the notion that the blind cannot weep (magis flebilis est quod non potest flere) is described as falsissima (Winterbottom translates as 'ill-founded'). E has eripuit, A has eripui which is the reading favoured by most modern editors. Eripui is probably correct: it is the difficilior lectio (with abstulit in the previous verse and the preceding quoque, eripuit would be the more obvious reading - hence, no doubt, the corruption) and it is rhetorically more effective because it is surprising: Oedipus has, somewhat illogically (see on 239), ascribed all his miseries to sors infesta, and one might expect him to hold her responsible for his blindness too. Quoque is not a problem, since it can associate two notions that are not exactly similar; cf., e.g., Liv. 24.49.3 quoniam Syphax se Romanis iunxisset ... docent melius fore Galae quoque Carthaginiensibus iungi (OLD quoque 1c).

241. **absiste**

At this point, Antigone must be imagined to have made some gesture of restraint or to have tried to speak; perhaps the latter in view of what follows: nullas animus admittit preces.

242. **nouamque poenam sceleribus quaerit parem**

The implication is that Oedipus' previous punishment, his self-blinding, was not sufficient expiation for his crimes.

243ff. **et esse par quae poterit?/.../sed matrem amaui**

Oedipus' question is left dangling as he moves on to an account of the unfortunate beginnings of his life, which eventually brings him back to the subject of his crimes (260ff.). His account is selective and twisted: there is no mention of the oracle in 245ff. as a result of which Oedipus was feared, mors quoque refugit (259) assumes that the audience knows that a shepherd rescued Oedipus, took him to Corinth etc., praestit Delphis fidem suggests that Oedipus' murder of Laius was, ironically, a pious act of obedience to Apollo, in 260 Seneca ignores the part of the legend in which Laius is said to have initiated the quarrel which prompted Oedipus to kill him, in 261 pietas redimet implies, with twisted humour, that Oedipus' incest was an act of atonement for his murder of Laius. Seneca is thus not simply providing background information for his audience; rather, it would appear that he assumes a knowledge of the legend (see Intro., 25 n.2), against which he intends

the audience to measure Oedipus' emotional and slanted version, a version which reveals the extent of his furor and the depth of his belief in his own guilt (see also on 251 sed numquid et peccauit and 252f.).

244. decreta mors est

For the expression, see Sen. Phaedr. 258.

245. uideram nondum diem

Seneca's choice of this periphrasis for birth (influenced, possibly, by Ov. Am. 2.14.22 uidissem nullos matre necante dies) is deliberate: Oedipus who now does not see the light was under sentence of death before he ever saw the light.

solueram ... moras

Cf. Sen. Troad. 1126f. hi classis moram/hac morte solui rentur. On the genitive, uteri ... clausi, see Hirschberg ad loc.

249. mors me antecessit

The sense of the conceit is clear: unlike those whom death snatches as soon as they have been born, Oedipus was not yet born before death (i.e. the sentence of death) overcame him.

uiscera

For uiscera used of the womb, cf. Sen. QN. 3.25.11 quarundam uiscera

longa sterilitate praeclusa; Quint. Inst. 10.3.4 ut maiora animalia diutius uisceribus parentis continerentur.

250. **praecoquis fati**

Genitive of definition. Praecox, most commonly found with reference to unripe fruit (OLD praecox 1a), is an appropriate choice of word in the context of the death of an unborn infant. Here it = 'premature'; cf. Enn. Ann. 278 praecox pugna est; Curt. 4.15.11 praecoqui gaudio uerita inritare fortunam. See Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 83 para. 183.

ferre ... letum

Cf. Sen. Troad. 1064 sed uterque letum mente generosa tulit.

251. **abstrusum, abditum**

The synonyms emphasise the pathos of Oedipus' helplessness against fate. The repetition of the prefix ab- gives them added force.

numquid

Numquid, like num, assumes a negative response. It occurs sixteen times in Senecan drama (see Denooz, 258), always in rhetorical questions, and usually in a series of two or more such questions: so Herc. Fur. 1180f., Thyest. 197f., 805ff.; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 11.

sed numquid et peccauit

The implication, revealed by et, is tht Oedipus had sinned. Seneca paradoxically depicts Oedipus as having committed a crime worthy of the death penalty while still in utero.

252. dubiumque an essem

See Hirschberg ad loc. on the use of dubium and cf. Quint. Decl. 277.7 (ed. Winterbottom) qui an nasci posset dubium fuit.

252f. sceleris infandi reum/deus egit

Reum ago with a genitive of the crime is standard legal jargon (OLD reus 3d). Its use here highlights the incongruity of the situation as presented by Seneca, in which an unborn child is portrayed as being a defendant in a capital case; cf. Sen. Oedip. 34 scilicet Phoebi reus. Sceleris infandi refers to Oedipus' murder of Laius, and reum deus egit is an allusion to the oracle of Apollo which predicted Laius' murder at the hands of his son. Cf. Jocasta's unwillingness to hold Apollo himself responsible for the oracle in S. OT. 711f.

253. illo teste damnauit parens

Illo teste = 'with him (Apollo) as witness' rather than Miller's 'on that evidence' (cf. me teste 413): Seneca continues the bizarre legal metaphor, casting Laius as the judge, Apollo as the chief witness and the unborn Oedipus as the defendant.

253ff. **illo teste damnauit parens/.../regio tinctas alit**

Cf. S. OT. 718f., where all that is said is: καὶ νιν ἀρθρα κεῖνος ἐνζεύξας ποδοῖν/ἔρριψεν ἄλλων χερσὶν εἰς ἄβατον ὄρος. This illustrates well the differences between the terse style of the Greek tragedian, to whom the poetry is a means by which ἦθος and μῦθος can be developed, and the flamboyance of Seneca, to whom the rhetoric is all important.

254. **calidoque teneros transuit ferro pedes**

For the five-word grouping, see 95 and note ad loc.

Teneros is a reminder of the extreme youth of Oedipus when he was exposed (according to the tradition, he was not yet three days old; see S. OT. 712f.). The juxtaposition of calido and teneros stresses the cruel nature of Oedipus' fate.

On the superiority of transuit of E (A has transtulit), see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm. 122; Hirschberg ad loc.

255f. **pabulum ... feris/auibusque saeuis**

Cf. Sen. Thyest. 750f. auibus epulandos licet/ ferisque triste pabulum saeuis trahat, 1032 Utrumne saeuis pabulum alitibus iacent; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1463 pabulum accipiant ferae. Sophocles does not mention the wild animals on Cithaeron, but in Sen. Oedip. 931f., after the anagnorisis, Oedipus begs Cithaeron: uel feras in me tuis/ emitte siluis.

256. **Cithaeron noxius**

Cf. 35, where Cithaeron is described as semper cruente saeue crudelis ferox, both because of the members of the royal house of Thebes who have died there, and, paradoxically, because Oedipus was not allowed to die there. Here the second notion is absent, but Oedipus returns to the association of Cithaeron with death in the Theban royal family.

257. **tinctus**

For tingo used with reference to bloodstains, see also, e.g., Lucr. 5.1327f. apri/tela infracta suo tingentes sanguine saeui; Prop. 4.1.111f. ferrum ceruice puellae/tinxit (OLD tingo 4).

258. **sed quem deus damnauit**

Apollo is now cast as the judge instead of as the chief witness; cf. 252f.

258f. **sed quem deus .../mors quoque refugit**

The final part of the tricolon, mors quoque refugit, comes as a surprise: Seneca has built up a pathetic picture of the infant Oedipus, victimized by Apollo and rejected by his father, only to

undermine it by revealing that Oedipus would actually have welcomed death, but that death, paradoxically, would have nothing to do with him. For the expression, cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 766 Mors refugit illum.

260. genitorem adortus impia straui nece

Seneca makes no mention of the extenuating circumstance which is a traditional part of the legend: that Laius struck the first blow (see S. OT. 808f.; Sen. Oedip. 770f.). Because Oedipus is not concerned with his legal guilt, but with his moral and religious pollution, which no extenuating circumstance can minimise, he gives only the fact that is crucial to him: that he murdered his father.

nece

Nece here has the specific sense of 'murder', as at 106; cf. 103.

261. hoc alia pietas redimet

Pietas here = 'an act of piety'(so Phoen. 97; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 986). The first act of piety was killing Laius (see on 259). Seneca here continues the paradox, as, with black humour, he portrays Oedipus' incestuous love for his mother as being an act of compensation (redimet) for the murder of his father. Hirschberg ad loc. observes that pietas is used with similar irony at Med. 904f. quidquid admissum est adhuc,/pietas uocetur.

261f. **occidi patrem,/sed matrem amaui**

There is some play on the variations of meaning of amo: loving one's mother, in the normal way, is a good and pious thing to do, but Oedipus' love for his mother, being sexual love, was neither normal nor pious. For amo used euphemistically of sexual intercourse, cf., e.g., Sen. Phaedr. 115ff. infando malo/ correpta pecoris efferum saeui ducem/ audax amasti; Mart. 3.58.38 alius [porrigit] coactos non amare capones (see Adams, Latin Sexual Vocabulary, 188). For the antithesis, cf. Sen. Contr. 7.5.9 maritum occidit, adulteram strinxit.

262. **hymenaeum**

Specifically the wedding-hymn, rather than the marriage as a whole (cf. OLD Hymenaeus 2): Oedipus is recalling particular details of the wedding ceremony, which symbolize the marriage itself.

262f. **proloqui hymenaeum pudet/taedasque nostras?**

Zwierlein (OCT), follows Bentley in punctuating with a question mark and maintains that this punctuation is supported by 450 an dico et ex quo? Apart from the fact that both 262f. and 450 refer to the incestuous horror of Oedipus' marriage, there seems to be little justification for believing that the latter passage (a question addressed by Jocasta to her sons) supports the former's being cast as a question also. Rather, it is the context of 262f. which is the determining factor, since proloqui ... nostras, punctuated as a statement ('I am ashamed to speak of my marriage'), fits somewhat awkwardly with has ... poenas (263f.), 'force yourself against your will to bear this punishment too.'

263. **quoque**

I.e. in addition to the punishments which he has already borne (viz. being condemned to death in utero and being left to die on Cithaeron) and to those which he is to inflict upon himself.

263f. **has ../. poenas**

Has refers to what follows: facinus ignotum ../. fare (264f.). For hic used in this way, cf., e.g., Cic. Att. 11.12.1 his uerbis ad Caesarem scripsi: de Quinto fratre ...; Sen. Suas. 2.2 hunc sumite animum: ... uinci non possumus (OLD hic 5a). Seneca probably uses the plural here instead of the singular hanc ... poenam for the sake of the harsh effect of the sibilants.

264. **efferum**

Efferum is commonly used by Seneca, as here, in a transferred sense; cf. Sen. Med. 385 recursat huc et huc motu effero; Troad. 51 caede effera.

264f. **ignotum efferum/inusitatum**

For the accumulation of epithets in asyndeton, cf. 224 nefandus incestificus exsecrabilis.

265. **quod populi horreant**

The plural populi is significant since it implies that Oedipus' crime is regarded as unspeakable not only by his own Greek society, but by every nation. As evidence for Roman abhorrence of incest, Liebeschuetz (Continuity and Change, 42 n.1) notes that slaves could be tortured to give evidence against their masters on this charge, the only other case where this was permissible in the first century AD being a treason trial. In Cic. Leg. 2.22 capital punishment is laid down for treason (Liebeschuetz, ibid., 43 n.1).

266. **quod esse factum nulla non aetas neget**

Cf. Sen. Thyest. 753f. o nullo scelus/credibile in aeuo quodque posteritas neget.

nulla non ... neget

The accumulation of negative results in a strong positive assertion, reinforced by the alliteration.

267. **quod parricidam pudeat**

Seneca is being witty: he says that even the worst type of criminal, a parricide, would shrink from incest, but a parricide is precisely what Oedipus is. Quod parricidam pudeat gains in effect by being the last in a series of three clauses describing the general abhorrence of incest.

toros

Torus here denotes the bed specifically as the scene of sexual activity; cf. Val. Fl. 159f. nostrosque toros uirgata tenebit/ et plaustro derepta nurus; Tac. Ann. 15.37 (OLD torus 5a).

267f. in patrios toros/tuli paterno sanguine aspersas manus

The horror of Oedipus' incest is emphasised by the repetition patrios ... paterno: it would have been bad enough if Oedipus had slept with his mother without having committed any other crime, but the fact that he did so while he was actually polluted by the murder of his father was to compound his crime to an almost inconceivable degree. For the horror of contact with one so polluted, cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 372f. Egone ut parentis sanguine aspersam manum/ fratrumque gemina caede contingam?

268. aspersas

Apart from its use at Herc. Fur. 135 (see Fitch ad loc.), aspergo in Senecan drama is always associated with blood (cf. Herc. Fur. 372, Troad. 256, 1107, Thyest. 95).

269. scelerisque pretium maius accepi scelus

With macabre wit, Oedipus describes Jocasta as being the prize for his parricide (since he would not have been able to marry her if he had not first killed Laius); cf. Sen. Oedip. 634f. ... pretia qui saeuae necis/ sceptra et nefandos occupat thalamos patris.

Accipio is here used ironically with the sense of 'welcome' - 'as the prize for my crime, I welcomed an even greater crime'; cf. Stat.

Theb. 12.691.

maius scelus

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 17 ... aliudque nobis maius indicunt scelus (i.e. incest), 629f. maximum Thebis scelus/ maternus amor est. This view of incest as a more heinous crime than parricide is unique to Seneca; Fantham, 'Incest and Fratricide', 71ff. observes that, of earlier writers, only Catullus includes incest at all in the catalogue of family-related crimes (64.403-406). For Lucretius fratricide was the ultimate revelation of man's inhumanity to man (3.70-73); Lucan, too, saw fratricide as the final horror (2.147-51). Cf. Verg. Aen. 6.621-24 where incest is put on a par with treason.

270. **leue est paternum facinus**

In order to emphasise the enormity of Oedipus' incest, Seneca dismisses his murder of Laius as a trivial offence by comparison. Cf. Sen. Thyest. 47, Med. 905-907 where, likewise, crimes which would ordinarily be considered heinous are dismissed as negligible. See also Phoen. 367-69.

thalamos

Here specifically = 'marriage bed'; cf., e.g., Catull. 61.185 uxor in thalamo tibi est; Stat. Theb. 5.137 auersis thalamos purgate maritis (OLD thalamus 2a).

271. **ne parum sceleris foret**

Oedipus is sarcastic, saying that his mother became pregnant so that he might not seem to have committed too few crimes.

272. **fecunda**

Fecunda here = concepit or peperit. Cf., e.g., Ov. Trist. 4.10.75f. filia me mea bis prima fecunda iuuenta/ ... fecit auum; Met. 2.471f. hoc etiam restabat, adultera, dixit,/ ut fecunda fores (see Bömer's note for further examples of this use of fecundus).

272f. **nullum crimen hoc maius potest natura ferre**

Oedipus grades his crimes: his parricide was leue (270), his incest was a maius scelus (269), and the greatest crimes is that he sired children (cf. Sen. Thyest. 745f. An ultra maius aut atrocius/ natura recepit?). This statement serves as an introduction to the theme of the fraternal strife, which dominates the rest of the fragment (273-362).

273. **si quod etiamnum est tamen**

Sc. maius crimen. For tamen in a conditional clause expressing a proviso, cf., e.g.: Plin. Ep. 3.1.4 liber legitur, interdum etiam praesentibus amicis, si tamen illi non gravantur (OLD tamen 5b).

273ff. This is the third allusion to the forthcoming strife of the brothers and the most detailed so far (see also 53ff. and 108ff. and commentary ad loc.). Seneca is building up to Antigone's

request (in the next scene) to Oedipus that he intervene before Eteocles and Polyneices lead their armies into battle (327ff.), and ultimately to the dominance of the theme of the fraternal conflict in the second fragment (326ff.).

Oedipus' presentiment of the ruin coming upon Thebes has no parallel among the human characters in Senecan drama, but it can be compared with the prophecy by the Ghost of Thyestes of Agamemnon's murder (Agam. 37ff.), although Opelt goes too far when she describes Oedipus as the embodiment of the spirit of the curse on his house, just as the Ghost of Thyestes in Agam. and the Ghost of Tantalus in Thyest. embody the spirit of the curse on their respective houses 'Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 276).

There is never any doubt that the prophecy of the Ghost of Thyestes will be fulfilled and that Agamemnon will be murdered, because the legend demands it. The dramatic interest of the play lies not in what happens, but in how it happens - how Clytemnestra overcomes her moment of weakness, how Cassandra's vision of the murder goes unheeded etc. The case of Oedipus' vision is different. Oedipus foresees that non leuis fessis uenit/ ruina Thebes (284f.). This does not mean, however, that had Seneca completed the play (see Intro., 18 for a discussion of the state of the play), he would have portrayed the destruction of Thebes. Just as the legend of the house of Atreus demands that Agamemnon be murdered, so the legend of the house of Thebes demands that Thebes be saved by the mutual slaughter of the brothers. Thus, the prophecy of the Ghost of Thyestes has to come true, while the destruction envisioned by Oedipus cannot actually strike Thebes. (It must be acknowledged that Oedipus never explicitly says that Thebes will be destroyed; he declares only that ruin is on its way (venit 284), weopons, flames and wounds threaten (instant 286); however, the most natural

interpretation of his words is that destruction is on its way and will arrive.) This points to the intention of Seneca to include in his play the mutual murder of the brothers by which Thebes is saved. Seneca does not allow the visionary powers of Oedipus to extend to the mutual murder, although there are two cryptic references which may well have been intended as pointers to the audience: nemo sine sacro feret/ illud cruore (278) and et istis si quod est maius malum (286).

Seneca's dramatic purpose in the vision of Oedipus is thus different from that in the prophecy of the Ghost of Thyestes. The prophecy of the latter removes all dramatic suspense on the level of the plot, because the audience knows what is to happen. The vision of the former, however, creates dramatic suspense in that the audience is left wondering how the fulfillment of Oedipus' prophecy will be avoided. The traditional curse of Oedipus on his sons plays no significant role in the play (see on 355).

274. **possent**

Potential subjunctive in a relative clause of characteristic.

274f. **abieci necis/ pretium paternae sceptrum**

Abieci indicates that Oedipus abdicated voluntarily; see also 104 regna deserui libens. Cf. 269 scelerisque pretium maius accepi scelus: just as Jocasta was Oedipus' 'prize' for his murder of Laius, so, likewise, the throne was another 'prize' for his parricide.

275f. **et hoc iterum manus/ armauit alias**

The manus referred to are those of Eteocles, the usurper. The metaphor whereby the sceptre is depicted as a weapon (armauit) refers to the impending battle for the throne between the brothers. Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 341f. rapta sed trepida manu/ sceptra obtinentur; omnis in ferro est salus.

277f. **nemo sine sacro feret/ illud cruore**

Cf. 648f. where Jocasta also predicts trouble for anyone who rules Thebes: sceptra Thebano fuit/ impune nulli gerere.... For the expression, cf. Luc. 3.124f. nullasque feres nisi sanguine sacro/ sparsas, raptor, opes. Sacro ... cruore alludes to the blood of a kinsman, considered sacred because of the religious bond of pietas linking members of a family to one another and to the gods; it may be a cryptic reference to the mutual slaughter of the brothers (see on 273ff.).

278f. **magna praesagit mala/paternus animus**

On the formulaic nature of the language, see Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 1147b-48. Cf. Sen. Thyest. 958 mens ante sui praesaga mali.

279. **iacta iam sunt semina**

Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 122) notes that the word-order of E iam sunt (A has sunt iam) is supported by Sen. Herc. Fur. 123 Movenda iam sunt bella.

280. spernitur pacti fides

Fides is the key-word here: the bond of fides was a sacred one (see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 104) and the Romans well knew that broken fides brought divine punishment (see, e.g., Liv. 5.21, 9.1); the breaking of a pactum between brothers, which implied impietas as well as broken fides, might well be expected to provoke the gods to supreme wrath.

281f. hic ../.ille

Nowhere in Phoen. are Eteocles and Polyneices identified by name. This might be ascribed simply to Seneca's fondness for metonymy and the consequent sparseness of proper names in his dramas, were it not for the notable absence of proper names in Phoen. in particular which seems to have dramatic significance (see on nata 2). Seneca's failure to name Eteocles and Polyneices is probably due, in addition, not only to the assumption that the audience would know which was which, but also the fact that the identity of the brothers is of little significance: the first fragment revolves around the affectus of Oedipus and the second around that of Jocasta, and the brothers have dramatic importance only in so far as they provoke the emotional outbursts of their parents; cf. the role of Polyneices in S. OC.

More interesting is the fact that there seems here to be an avoidance by Seneca of the family term, natus (on the frequent use of family terms for rhetorical effect in Phoen. as a whole, see note on nata 2 and on 182ff.). From 272 onwards, when the subject of the fraternal conflict is introduced, Seneca seems to be at pains not to refer to the brothers as Oedipus' sons (apart from the use of hic and ille here, see also 274 qui facere possent and 275f. manus/ ...

alias). This reluctance for the family term suggests Oedipus' dissociation from his sons and causes his bitter acknowledgement of them in the final verse of his speech (287) to have considerable impact.

282. **icti foederis**

Miller translates incorrectly as 'the broken bond'. Foedus ico = 'make an agreement' (see, e.g., Liv. 1.24.3 foedus ictum inter Romanos et Albanos est; Luc. 10.371f. per ... ictum sanguine Magni/ foedus). Polyneices is reminding the gods, as the protectors of the sanctity of agreements sealed by an oath, of the pact that he and Eteocles made, rather than pointing out to them the broken agreement.

282f. **ius .../inuocat**

Polyneices invokes his right to rule according to the pact which he made with Eteocles (see on 280).

283f. **et Argos exul atque urbes mouet/Graias in arma**

Seneca does not here explain the connection between Polyneices and Argos, since there is no rhetorical mileage to be gained from it in this context. In the second fragment (363ff.), however, Jocasta soon mentions Polyneices marriage to Adrastus' daughter (374ff.), thereby preparing the way for her lament (which has its origin in E. Ph. 338ff.) that she was not able to assist at his wedding. On the Roman significance of exile, see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 63f.

284f. fessis ../. Thebis

For fessus used of places, cf. Val. Fl. 5.278f. nox .../rettulerat fessis ... silentia terris; Amm. 14.11.11 prouinciae diu fessae. Thebes is weary as a result of all the trials which she has had to endure: the Sphinx, the plague, the horrifying discovery of Oedipus' true identity (see Wurnig, Gefühlsdarstellungen in den Tragödien Senecas, 102f).

285. tela flammae uulnera

Cf. the asyndeta in the prophecy of the Ghost of Thyestes (Sen. Agam. 45ff.; see Tarrant's note ad loc).

286. et istis si quod est maius malum

A cryptic clause; perhaps Seneca intended his audience to see an allusion to the mutual murder of the brothers (see on 273ff.).

287. ut esse genitos nemo non ex me sciat

This reveals the same kind of twisted thinking as does 305f. morique propero, dum in domo nemo est mea/nocentior me. Characteristically, Oedipus sees the prospect of the destruction of Thebes only in terms of himself.

288ff. **si nulla ... grauiter furentes**

Antigone seizes on the new element in Oedipus' emotional outburst, the threatening war between the brothers, and uses it in a final attempt to dissuade Oedipus from death. The abundance of family terms is significant: Antigone appeals to Oedipus as her father and as the father of Eteocles and Polyneices to intervene between his sons, thereby raising again the painful matter of the confusion of relationships in the family. Seneca clearly intends this to be ironical, since it is nowhere suggested that Antigone, although she must be aware of the ambivalent nature of Oedipus' relationship to her, thinks of him other than straightforwardly as her father. Similarly, Oedipus, although very conscious of the horror of his incestuous marriage, does not appear to consider Antigone as anything other than his daughter.

289. **regas**

A clever choice of word in the context: Oedipus, the ex-king, is asked to 'rule' his sons who are competing for the right to rule Thebes.

abunde est

The expression is common in prose but rare in poetry (see TLL 1.230.40ff.); it occurs twice in Senecan drama (see also Thyest. 279; cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 860).

290ff. Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 129 observes: 'Mit bellum impium, cives, patria, foedus laesum und fides ... steht hier pax

innerhalb einer politischen Begriffsreihe ausgesprochen römischen Charakters'.

290. **grauiter furentes**

There is some irony in the fact that Oedipus, himself full of ira, should be asked to control his raging sons.

impii belli minas

Cf. 402 impia arma. The war is impious because it is being waged by two brothers who should be bound by the sacred bonds of familial pietas. For the expression belli minas, c.f., Sen. Ben. 6.31.5; Luc. 5.108; Tac. Hist. 4.22.1.

291. **unus**

Oedipus is not, of course, the only one who could reconcile the brothers - there is Jocasta too - but Antigone, in her eagerness to persuade Oedipus to carry on living, exaggerates the desperate need for his intervention. The repetition of tu (290, 291) gives force to Antigone's plea.

293f. **ciuibus pacem dare,/ patriae quietem, foederi laeso fidem**

For the tricolon, cf. Caes. BC. 3.57.4 quietem Italiae, pacem prouinciarum, salutem imperi uni omnis acceptem relaturos. Seneca reserves foederi laeso until last, since that is the condition on which the first two parts of the tricolon depend, and the culmination of Antigone's request: unless the brothers can be

persuaded to return to the terms of their agreement, there will be no lasting peace.

294. uitam tibi ipse si negas, multis negas

This sententia, with its apparent paradox, neatly summarises Antigone's argument: Oedipus alone can reconcile the brothers and so restore peace to Thebes; if he kills himself, he will be responsible also for the deaths of those who will fall in the war.

295. Illis parentis ullus aut aequi est amor

Oedipus' response to Antigone's request is elliptical: [No, I shall not intervene; how could you think they would listen to me since ...]. The implication of parentis ullus ... amor is that if Eteocles and Polyneices loved their father they would not have started a quarrel which they knew would distress him.

296f. auidis cruoris imperi armorum doli,/diris, scelestis

Cf. Sen. Agam. 47 scelera ... dolus caedes cruor and see Tarrant ad loc. on the abundance of asyndeta in Roman drama.

Oedipus does not differentiate between his sons. The fact that Polyneices clearly has some cause for grievance does not weigh with him. Polyneices' instigation of a war against his brother is a crime of such enormous impiety that it places him firmly in the same bracket as his brother. In S. OC. Oedipus curses both sons with impartial fervour (421ff., 1375ff.), but in that case both sons had incurred his wrath because of their neglect of him (cf. also E. Ph. 63ff.), and Polyneices, although the injured party in the fraternal

conflict, was especially culpable in that he was on the throne when Oedipus was sent into exile (1354ff.).

297. **breuiter ut dicam**

This prosaic expression (see TLL 2. 2184.60-71) does not occur elsewhere in the plays; the closest parallel is at Sen. Herc. Fur. 401 where Lycus says pauca pro causa loquar.

297. **meis**

For this use of meis, cf. Sen. Med. 934f. occidant, non sunt mei;/ pereant, mei sunt. The brothers are recognizable as Oedipus' sons, not because of their particular criminal tendencies - Oedipus did not lust after blood, power, arms or treachery - but because of their general propensity for evil, and, more specifically for evil which involves the family. Seneca has little use for the outmoded divine machinery of Greek tragedy; in his dramas, the crimes that are committed by one generation after another in a family are attributable at least as much (and in Phoen., entirely) to an hereditary criminal tendency as to the operation of a continuing curse on the house (see, e.g., Sen. Agam., where the Ghost of Thyestes, though embodying the curse on the house, serves more to create a sinister atmosphere for the opening of the drama, and the murder of Agamemnon is attributed to the fact that Aegisthus is Thyestes' son and Clytemnestra is Helen's sister (906f.); in explanation of her passion for Hippolytus Phaedra says that Venus punishes all the descendants of Phoebus probris ../. nefandis (Sen. Phaedr. 126f.), but acknowledges also the hereditary nature of her unnatural love (113)). Tarrant on Agam. 906f. notes that Seneca's

rhetorical exploitation of the idea of a family propensity for crime is not peculiar to him; he cites by way of example, Cic. Tusc. 4.77 ut facile appareat Atrei filios esse; Ov. Her. 4.61f. en, ego nunc, ne forte parum Minoia credar,/ in socias leges ultima gentis eo; see also Ov. Trist. 4.5.31, Pont. 2.8.32 on moral resemblance of child to parent proving parentage.

certant in omne facinus

For the thought, cf. Luc. 1.5f. certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis/in commune nefas.

For the expression certo in + acc (= 'vie in'), see in addition only Sen. Contr. 2.7.1 ut in accessionem patrimoni peregrinando cum uxore certarem.

Rivalry in crime within the family is a topos of Senecan drama; cf. Phoen. 335ff. (and see commentary ad loc.); Agam. 25f., 124, 169; Thyest. 18ff., 193ff.; Phaedr. 142ff.

298f. **pensi nihil/ducunt**

The expression is prosaic (OLD pendo 7; TLL 5.2156.41ff.) and does not occur elsewhere in Senecan drama. Its presence here is striking, coming, as it does, so shortly after the equally prosaic breuiter ut dicam (297).

299. illos

Leo's emendation to ipsos of the MSS' illos is not convincing, since a) the context does not demand an intensifying pronoun, and b) Seneca uses illis in 295 and 301.

ira praecipites agit

Ira has previously been associated only with Oedipus (163, 186); by attributing ira now also to the brothers, Seneca links father and sons, reinforcing Oedipus' assertion that Eteocles and Polyneices have revealed themselves to be truly his sons (296). See also note on manus 329. Hirschberg ad loc. notes the parallel Agebat adhuc regem ira praecipitem in Ira 3.20.4.

Ubi ... agit

Ubi = quo (see Hirschberg ad loc.) and the clause is almost parenthetical, the sense being: 'They vie in crime of every kind and consider nothing of consequence - to which [state] passion drives them headlong - and born through crime ....' Agat of A presumably takes ubi ... agat as an indirect question dependent on pensi nihil ducunt (= 'and they do not care where anger is driving them headlong'), which makes sense but is rhetorically less forceful than ubi ... agit of E.

300. **nefasque nullum per nefas nati putant**

Cf. 337 sic estis orti: the criminal tendencies of the parents are repeated in their offspring (see also on 297). The alliteration reinforces the thought.

301. **non patris illos tangit afflicti pudor**

Pudor = 'regard (for)', with patris afflicti an objective genitive (see OLD pudor 1c). Tangit = 'affects'; for tango used of emotions see also Sen. Thyest. 130.

The verse has a specific rather than a general application : Seneca is not implying a general neglect of Oedipus by his sons, as in S. OC.; their lack of regard for him consists only in their preparation for war against each other.

302. patria

Enallage for patriae.

regno ... attonitum

= regni cupidine attonitum.

304. leti quaero maturi uiam

The reading of A, maturi, is preferable to maturam of E., since it is the death of Oedipus which is to be early, not the uia by which he achieves it. There may be some play on the expression uia leti/mortis, which commonly means 'a way of dying' (OLD uia 8b); here, it has that sense, but, in view of Oedipus' location, it could also literally mean 'a way which will lead me to death' (cf. 5f. melius inueniam uiam,/... quae me ab hac uita extrahat).

305f. dum in domo nemo est mea/nocentior me

Nicely ambiguous: on the surface Oedipus is saying that he wants to die before he has to endure the pain of seeing his sons exceed the horror of his crimes; the curious way in which Seneca expresses this thought, however, with the emphasis on Oedipus' guilt (see mea ... me) suggests a hint of rivalry here - Oedipus, taking a perverse

pride in his crimes, wants to die before his sons surpass him in wickedness. Cf. 336f., where, conversely but equally bizarrely, Oedipus urges his sons to commit crimes greater than his own so that he may be glad that he has lived so long.

306f. Nata, quid genibus meis/fles aduoluta

For the expression genibus ... aduoluor, see also Sen. Phaedr. 703 iterum, superbe, genibus aduoluor tuis.

Clearly Seneca envisaged some stage action at this point - Antigone must be imagined to rush forward and throw herself weeping, at her father's feet, perhaps embracing his knees in supplication. For references to this suppliant posture, see Hirschberg ad loc.

307ff. Sudden changes of heart near the end of a scene are common in Senecan drama; cf. Phaedr. 251; Thyest. 488, 542; Med. 294f.; Agam. 307. Zwierlein (Rezitationsdramen, 108 n. 42) observes that 'es Senecas Eigenart ist, ein Pathos - Motiv bis zum äusssersten auszuschöpfen ... und dann ganz abrupt wieder in die Situation der Handlung zurückzuspringen'. With reference to Oedipus' capitulation here Friedrich (Senecas dramatischer Technik, 127) comments: 'Senecas Absicht, zum Schluss zu kommen, ist so deutlich, dass sie fast verstimmend wirken kann' (see also Wurnig, Gefühlsdarstellungen in den Tragödien Senecas, 106 n. 60). Oedipus' surrender does come as a surprise in that his resolve to die has shown no signs of weakening before Antigone's pleas and persuasions; however, the extreme nature of Antigone's act of supplication - an act usually reserved for situations in which the life of the suppliant is threatened - goes some way towards explaining Oedipus' capitulation

(cf. the appeals of Hercules' son (Sen. Herc. Fur. 1002ff.) and of Andromache (Sen.Troad. 691ff.) which fail, resulting in the murder of the former and of the latter's son; for an inversion of this type of plea, cf. Phaedr. where Phaedra supplicates (703) and asks Hippolytus to kill her (710-12) but he refuses.

A close parallel to the debate on suicide between Oedipus and Antigone and to Oedipus' sudden yielding is found in Sen. Herc. Fur 1200ff.: both Oedipus and Hercules wish to die because of the horror of their past misdeeds and because they wish to avoid seeing the perpetration of further horrors (in Oedipus' case, he anticipates the conflict between his sons; Hercules (1263) fears that he himself may turn on his father also); Antigone and Amphitryon both try to dissuade their kinsmen from suicide by presenting their deeds as error rather than scelus (see Herc. Fur. 1237, 1297, 1300f.); both Oedipus and Hercules, though apparently determined on death, yield at the last, not to the persuasions and arguments of their respective kinsmen, but to their final, desperate, non-verbal pleas (Antigone falls in tears at her father's feet, Amphitryon attempts to kill himself). Verbal parallels and echoes of thought between the two scenes exist also; particularly striking are: Herc. Fur. 1250f. unicum lapsae domus/firmamen which is reminiscent of Phoen. 1f. fessi unicum/patris leuamen; Herc. Fur. 1262 morte sanandum est scelus recalls Phoen. 89f. unica Oedipodae est salus,/non esse saluum; Herc. Fur. 1259-61 resembles Phoen. 237-40; Herc. Fur. 1317 uiuamus recalls Phoen. 319. uel uiuet (see further Edert, Uber Senecas Herakles, 83f.; Zwierlein, Senecas Hercules im Lichte, 29).

307. quid prece indomitum domas?

Cf. 241 nullas animus admittit preces. Prece here clearly does not

refer to a verbal plea (pace Zwierlein (Rezitationsdramen, 62) who observes that Seneca's failure to ascribe words (to which prece refers) to Antigone argues against his having intended the play for stage performance; see Intro., 63ff.), but to the appeal implicit in Antigone's suppliant position. On indomitum domas, see Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 1093.

308f. unum hoc habet fortuna quo possim capi/inuictus aliis

Oedipus declares that he can be moved, capi (cf. Sen. Thyest. 301f. faciles capi/ prece commouebo), only by Antigone and he goes on to say that for her sake he will live. In Stoic terms, this was the right decision to make (see note on 77ff.); in this respect, although not in his attitude towards his sons, Oedipus' ratio has triumphed over his furor.

310. mollire duros

Antithesis resulting from the juxtaposition of single words of contrasted meaning is a rhetorical device which Seneca uses freely; c.f., e.g., 17 sorores mater, 65 duobus omnis, 307 indomitum domas.

310f. sola pietatem in domo/docere nostra

Cf. 328ff. where Oedipus says: Ego ille sum qui scelera comitti uetem/et abstineri sanguine a caro manus/doceam?

312. impera

See also iubente te (314, 318, 319); cf. imperium at Sen. Herc. Fur.

1315. The reversal of traditional roles is noteworthy: Antigone, the daughter, commands her father by virtue of her position as the only member of the household who can teach pietas (310f.). In Roman poetry, imperiousness is a characteristic of mistresses and sometimes wives (see Prop. 3.16.2, 4.1.143f., 4.8.81f.; Ov. AA. 2.223; Juv. 6.224), but not of daughters.

313. hic Oedipus Aegaea transnabit freta

Leander swam the Hellespont, in the north-east corner of the Aegaean, for the sake of Hero (see, e.g., Ov. Her. 18, 19). Seneca makes Oedipus surpass this feat by offering to swim right across the notoriously stormy (see Verg. Aen. 12.365f.; Hor. Od. 2.16.1ff., 3.29.63) Aegean itself to prove the extent of his devotion to Antigone. Hirschberg ad loc. cites Sen. Ira 1.21.3 uideatur et libido magni animi : transnat freta.

314ff. flammasque/.../excipiet ore

The swallowing of burning coals as a means of committing suicide is attested in Vell. 2.88.3 (Woodman ad loc. expresses scepticism regarding this as a likely method of suicide), Sen. Prou. 6.9 (see Hirschberg ad loc. for further references). Cf. Shakespeare's Julius Caesar IV.iii.154, where Portia, Brutus' wife is said to have "swallowed fire". Again, Seneca makes Oedipus offer to exceed tradition by proposing that he take into his mouth, not mere burning coals or ordinary flames, but the fiery balls rolling down from Etna.

314f. Siculo .../de monte

I.e. Etna, whose volcanic activity attracted much attention from ancient writers (see Smith, Dict. of Gr. and Rmn. Geog., I. 61f.). For other references to Etna or its fires in Senecan drama, see Med. 410, Thyest. 583, Phaedr. 156, 190, Herc. Fur. 106.

315. igneos uoluens globas

S emends soluens found in E and A to uoluens. Both soluens and uoluens make sense, but uoluens is probably correct: it is rhetorically more effective and is attested also in Verg. Georg. 1.472f. (uidimus ... Aetnam,/ flammarumque globos liquifactaque uoluere saxa), by which Seneca seems to have been influenced here. The corruption of u to s could have occurred under the influence of the s of igneos.

316f. serpenti .../quae saeua furto nemoris Herculeo furit

The reference is to the dragon which guarded the apples of the Hesperides. In most versions of this labour of Hercules, Hercules obtains the apples by killing the dragon (so App. Rhod. 4.1396ff.; E. HF. 398f.; Lucr. 5.37; Hyg. Fab. 30; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 18), but in Sen. Herc. Fur. 530ff. the dragon is merely drugged, and in Sen. Agam. 852ff. the dragon simply does not see Hercules until it is too late (see Tarrant ad loc.). Seneca could have had either of these versions in mind here.

317. nemoris

Miller translates incorrectly as '[the dragon still savagely raging]

in the grove'; the sense must surely be '[the dragon, which savagely rages at the theft of Hercules] from the grove.' Cf. Sen. Med. 821f. [Prometheus] caeli/qui furta luit uiscera feto. This use of the genitive, instead of a prepositional phrase, indicating 'place from which' with furtum occurs only in these two instances (TLL 6.1646.26-8) and the Greek equivalent, κλοπή , does not seem to be used in this way. It would appear that Seneca was perhaps influenced in his usage of furtum here and in Med. 822 by the 'Greek' genitive of separation found inter alia with verbs of 'freeing from', 'restraining from' (see, e.g., Plaut. Rud. 247 ut me omnium iam laborum leuas; Hor. Od. 2.9.17 desine mollium tandem querellarum and Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc.; further examples in L-H-S 2.81-3)

318. iubente te praebebit alitibus iecur

I.e. like Prometheus. The progression of Seneca's thought from Hercules to Prometheus is explicable in mythological terms, since, on his way to fetch the golden apples, Hercules is said, in some versions of the legend, to have killed the eagle which preyed on Prometheus' liver (Hes. Theog. 525ff.; Apollod. 2.5.11; Hyg. Fab. 54, 144).

319. iubente te uel uiuet

The key-word is uel (= 'even'; OLD uel 5a), by which Oedipus implies that for him to carry on living is more difficult than it would be to perform any of the exploits which he has listed (313-18); cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1316f. eat ad labores hic quoque Herculeos labor:/ uiuamus and, with reference to Seneca's own capitulation, Sen. Ep.

78.2 itaque imperaui mihi ut uiuerem; aliquando enim et uiuere fortiter facere est (see also on 77ff.).

The unexpected or paradoxical climax is a feature of Senecan dramatic technique; cf. Med. 19f. (and see Costa ad loc.), Herc. Fur. 1260f., Thyest. 290-93 where Tarrant observes: 'It is characteristic of such twists that the pointed conclusion is verbally plainer than the phrases which precede it'.

One may compare also Catull. 11 where Catullus, after acknowledging the readiness of Furius and Aurelius (perhaps ironically, considering the opinion he expresses of them elsewhere) to travel to the most barbarous and dangerous parts of the world with him, asks them only to take a message of hatred to Lesbia. The implication, as here, is that the comparative lack of effort demanded by the climax to the catalogue of dangerous exploits is nevertheless more difficult for Catullus to supply because of his personal circumstances. On the sharing of arduous journeys as a sign of devotion, see Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. Od. 2.6.1.

The half-line, as Tarrant points out (HSCPh 82 (1978), 229 n.86), cannot be taken as an indication that the play is incomplete, since metrically incomplete lines occur also at Thyest. 100, Phaedr. 605 (both of these modern editors have tended to delete, but see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 199 on Phaedr. 605), and Troad. 1103, and none of these dramas seems to be unfinished. Of the half-line in Troad., Fantham comments that it is 'broken off, as the ritual is broken off, by the child's sudden leap to claim his inheritance', the implication being that the incomplete verse has a deliberate artistic purpose. It is true that both Troad. 1103 and Phoen. 319 are effective as they stand, but it is dangerous to apply modern notions of poetic technique to the works of ancient authors. Seneca not infrequently allows the climax of an idea or theme to end in the

middle of a line (so, e.g., Agam. 552; Thyest. 330; Herc. Fur. 1143; Troad. 476; Med. 25), but the effectiveness of this device is not lost because the line is completed. Hence the effectiveness of a half-line is no guarantee that Seneca intended to leave the line unfinished. There appears to be no reason to believe that Vergil would not have removed the anomaly of the unfinished lines in the Aeneid had he lived to complete his revision of the poem; for a sane discussion, see Camps (An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid, 128ff.), who points out that the idea of using an incomplete line as an artistic device is not recorded as having occurred to anyone in the ancient world. Furthermore, there is a significant lack of imitation of the Vergilian half-line in later hexameter verse. There seems, thus, to be no reason to believe that Seneca would not have removed or completed the unfinished verses in his plays had he been concerned to polish his dramas, which give evidence in other respects (e.g. clumsy versification, excessive use of stock descriptions, unoriginal and repetitive choral lyrics) of having been composed with careless speed.

320ff. E takes 320-62 as a continuation of the first scene (1-319) and gives 320-27 and 347-49 to Antigone. A begins a new scene at 320, assigning 320-27 to a Nuntius and 347-49 to Antigone. That 320 begins a new scene must be correct: as Friedrich observed 306-19 constitutes an 'ausgesprochenes Schlussstück' (Senecas dramatischer Technik, 128).

More contentious, however, is the allocation of 320-27 and 347-49. Leo gave 320-27 to Antigone suggesting that at least one verse is missing before 320 which might have been something like parumper aures commoda : te iam, pater (Obs. Crit., 80). Friedrich (op cit.,

128) claimed that frater (324), which refers to Polyneices, could only be spoken by a sister. Müller (Philologus 60 (1901), 263ff.), on the other hand, argued that 320-27 are spoken by a Nuntius : 1) regia stirpe editum is more suitable coming from a messenger to a king than from a daughter to a father (Zwierlien, WüJbb. 4 (1978), 146, compares Regina of the Satelles in 387 and Sen. Oedip. 784f.) 2) frater (324) need not indicate that Antigone is speaking, since the image of the brothers is derived from arma fraterna (321). (One may note, in addition, that in 401 the Satelles refers to the brothers as fratres (i, redde amorem fratribus); there is no reason, therefore, why the Nuntius should not do so here.) Mesk (WS 37 (1915), 293) observed, moreover, that the tone of the entire scene is impersonal and official and unlike a conversation between a father and a daughter who share a deep affection.

With regard to 347-49, there are reasons for doubting that these verses have been correctly ascribed by the MSS to Antigone. Müller (ibid.) argued that if Antigone were speaking, she would not say liberis (349) but natis or fratribus and noted that Antigone does not, as one might expect, address Oedipus as 'father' in 347 and that in 350f. Oedipus does not refer to himself as a father but simply as a senex. The fact that liberis is used of the brothers is not a cogent argument against Antigone's being the speaker, since conversely, as has been observed, in 401 the Satelles refers to the brothers as fratribus. Nor is the fact that Antigone does not call Oedipus 'father' and that Oedipus refers to himself as senem conclusive, although it is strange that, in a play in which family terms are used so frequently and so tellingly, Seneca should have missed an opportunity here, particularly since, as Zwierlein points out (op. cit., 147), when Antigone urges her mother to action in 403ff., she addresses her once as parens (403) and twice

as mater (405, 416). The phrase publica ... mala (348) is perhaps more convincing from a Theban official than from Antigone (so Zwierlein, op. cit., 148), although Antigone has previously shown concern for the Theban people as a whole (292ff.). More compelling is Zwierlein's argument (ibid.) that when Oedipus in 350ff. says: Vides modestae deditum menti senem ..., he seems to be presenting his emotional state to someone for the first time. This would have to be the Nuntius since Antigone already knows about his ira.

This act is the shortest in Senecan drama (see Intro., 6), but is extremely powerful for all its brevity, since in it the full force of Oedipus' furor, which Seneca has portrayed as abating at the end of the previous act, breaks out once more, directed this time primarily at Eteocles and Polyneices. Structurally, this act forms the link between the 'Oedipus-part' of the play and the 'Jocasta-part': in it, the theme of the fraternal conflict, which, in the 'Oedipus-part', is subordinated to the theme of Oedipus' libido moriendi, emerges strongly, in anticipation of its domination in the 'Jocasta-part', and the appearance of Jocasta herself is prepared for by the reference to her in 358, where she is closely associated with the brothers' battle (see further Intro., 15 and below on 329 manus).

On the location of this act, see Intro., 7 n.1.

320. **exemplum in ingens regia stirpe editum**

This verse is problematic. E reads exemplum ingens regia stirpe editum, while A reads regia stirpe edite. Edite cannot be correct and the omission of part of the verse by A seems to indicate a desire to dispose of the half-line in 319 by completing it, with a careless disregard for the metre, with the second half of 320.

Lipsius corrected a simple case of haplography by restoring in to the reading of E. Leo pointed out (Obs. Crit., 80) that it is not immediately obvious to whom regia stirpe editum refers, and suggested that at least one verse is missing before 320. This is probably correct, since the pronoun te, perhaps with Oedipoda, seems to be called for here. There is no reason to suppose, however, that what is missing is the two and a half feet needed to complete 319. Seneca not infrequently ends a major speech with a metrically incomplete verse, leaving the next speaker to complete the line (so, e.g., Oedip. 81, Phaedr. 177, Thyest. 204), but 319, as the final verse not merely of a speech, but of the whole scene, could hardly be left to be completed in a new scene, particularly if one supposes Seneca to have intended there to be a choral ode between the two scenes (see Intro., 21).

exemplum in ingens

The Nuntius diplomatically draws a veil over Oedipus' unhappy recent history and refers only to his glorious past, in which he appeared as an exemplum of courage and intelligence by facing the dreaded Sphinx and solving her riddle (see Sen. Oedip. 92ff.).

in

In here expresses purpose (= 'so as to be'); cf. Sen. Ep. 66.4 Claranus mihi uidetur in exemplar editus, Prou. 6.3 nati sunt in exemplar, Ira 2.16.1 Errat qui ea in exemplum hominis adducit, 3.19.1 animaduersiones quo notiores sunt plus in exemplum emendationemque proficiant (see further TLL 7. 768. 9ff.).

321f. **Thebae pauentes ./.. faces**

The Thebans clearly consider Oedipus to have some influence over his sons (cf. 554ff., where Jocasta holds up Oedipus as an example to Polyneices). This bears out Oedipus' assertion that he gave up the throne willingly (105) and suggests that he continued to live in Thebes as a respected citizen (cf. E. Ph. 63ff.) until the horror of the conflict of the brothers drove him into voluntary exile.

322. **tectis ... patriis**

Patrius = 'of your city/ country' (cf., e.g., Stat. Theb. 11.277 hos pelago patrius iam detulit amnis; Tac. Ann. 15.29 eques compositus per turmas et insignibus patriis; OLD patrius 4a) rather than 'ancestral': Oedipus is urged to save from destruction the entire city and not merely the royal palace.

323. **non sunt minae**

This must be understood in the context of 322. The Nuntius is telling Oedipus that what he has just said about Thebes being set alight by enemy torches is not an exaggeration of the seriousness of the situation - the war is no longer a mere threat, it is a reality. Cf. Antigone's words at 290f. tu impii belli minas/ auertere ... partes. Tantum must be understood here, as at 451b (for tantum understood in the prose works, see Axelson, Senecastudien, 62f.; Hine on Sen. QN. 2.11.1).

malum

Malum embraces both the normal evil of war and the impiety of two brothers who are about to join battle against each other. Cf. 286 malum.

325. **in bella cunctos Graeciae populos agit**

The more imminent the war becomes, the more vast is said to be the extent of the enemy forces: in 58 Polyneices is described as cateruas ... Argolicas agens; by 283f., when Oedipus prophesies the destruction of Thebes, these have become urbes ... Graias; now, when the danger of war is immediate, the Nuntius announces that Polyneices cunctos Graeciae populos agit.

326. **septena muros castra Thebanos premunt.**

Seneca, like Sophocles (OC. 1305ff.), does not explain why there were seven bands; Aeschylus (Th. 377ff.) and Euripides (Ph. 1092f.) assign each of the seven bands to one of the seven gates of Thebes. Each of the Greek tragedians gives a list of the names (which vary slightly from playwright to playwright) of the leaders of the seven companies. This Seneca, despite his notorious fondness for catalogues, does not do, either here or at 391ff. This may be because in the Senecan version of the fraternal conflict the outbreak of war is more imminent than it is in any of the versions of the Greek tragedians - by the time Jocasta tries to reconcile the brothers, the two armies are on the point of joining battle - and Seneca realized that the inclusion of a lengthy catalogue in a situation of dramatic urgency might dissipate, rather than heighten (as it does in E. Ph.), the dramatic suspense.

septena

The distributive rather than the cardinal number is regularly used with words which occur only in the plural (see K-S 1.121; L-H-S 2.212); cf. 391 septena reges bella dispositi, where septena is used metri gratia instead of septem.

327. **et bellum et scelus**

Scelus, the reading of E, is to be preferred to nefas of A because of scelera in the following verse - the technique whereby a character begins a speech by picking up a key-word at the end of the previous speech is much favoured by Seneca (cf., e.g., Phoen. 215f., 349ff., 477f.) - although in terms of sense nefas would be equally acceptable. Scelus refers, as in part does malum (323), to the outrageous impiety of a war waged between brothers.

328ff. **uetem/.../doceam**

Present subjunctives in relative clauses of characteristic.

329. **manus**

For manus as an important word motif in Phoen., see note on manum (52). Manus here is associated both with the violence of Oedipus against his father (a prominent theme in 1-319) and with the violence of his sons (which dominates the second fragment), suggesting the transitional natures of this scene (on this, see Paul, Eigenart von Senecas Phoenissen, 58) in which the focus of attention shifts from Oedipus himself to the actions of the brothers.

sanguine a caro

Miller translates well as 'from the blood of loved ones.' Hirschberg ad loc. compares Sen. Herc. Fur. 745 sanguine humano abstine and Ep. 114.7 pepercit gladio, sanguine abstinuit.

331. **ego sum**

Seneca reserves ego sum until the end of the sentence to express maximum incredulity.

meorum facinorum exempla

A reads meorum exempla facinorum, which results in a short syllable in the fifth foot; Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 123) notes, in addition, that meorum facinorum (E) occurs in the same position in the verse also in Sen. Herc. Fur. 1183 and Med. 561.

exempla appetunt

For appeto used in the sense of 'follow/imitate (an example)', cf. Sen. Phaedr. 916 prisca et antiqua appetens. Tarrant (on Sen. Thyest. 243) notes that the traditional Roman attitude of looking to one's ancestors as models of good behaviour is inverted in Sen. Thyest. and Oedip. (as it is here), where the family tradition is one of crime rather than virtue. On the same theme, see Hirschberg on 331ff.

332. **laudo et agnosco libens**

Cf. [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 954f. nunc ueram tui / agnosce prolem.

333. dignum

Senecan characters, whose state of extreme guilt and anguish tends to express itself in a perverse revelling in their crimes, frequently use dignus of themselves or their actions; cf., e.g., Agam. 34, Oedip. 879, Troad. 863, Thyest. 271. Tarrant on Agam. 34 suggests that this may be a deliberate reversal of the concern to behave correctly as one's dignitas demands. He notes that dignus is used sarcastically also by other authors (e.g. Cic. Verr. 4.37) and that equivalent words may be found used in this way in Greek (e.g. S. El. 1487f.).

334. agite, o propago clara

For the superiority of clara (A) over cara (E), see Zwierlein's convincing argument (Krit. Komm., 123).

For the collective singular with a plural verb, cf., e.g., Lucr. 4.997f. catulorum blanda propago/ ... instant.; Plin. HN. 7.62 aliorum eius liberum propago Liciniani sunt cognominati (see K-S 1.22-4 for further examples).

334f. generosam indolem/probate factis

Seneca ironically inverts the traditional concern to act correctly in all things in accordance with one's noble origins (expressed, e.g., in Sen. Oedip. 82ff., Herc. Fur. 1239): the origins of Eteocles and Polyneices are noble, but so tainted with impiety that to act as befits them is to plunge into crime. Cf. 339.

335f. **gloriam ac laudes meas/superate**

Oedipus refers not to the genuine acclaim which he won when he saved Thebes from the Sphinx, but sarcastically (as 352ff. make clear) to the horror which the discovery of his crimes evoked. Cf. the speech of the Nuntius (320f.), where Oedipus' crimes are passed over and only his early greatness and heroism are recalled. On family rivalry in crime in Senecan drama, see on 298, 305f. and Tarrant on Agam. 26f. Braden (Arion 9 (1970), 22f.) suggests that the compulsion to perform deeds greater than those accomplished in the past 'is an important psychological component of a heroic culture'. The topos is variously used: in Agam. 124 and Thyest. 193ff., Clytemnestra and Atreus spur themselves on to their respective crimes by desiring to outdo their siblings in wickedness; in Phaedr. 142ff., the Nurse urges Phaedra not to outsin her mother and at 687ff. Hippolytus accuses her of having done so. This is the most daring use of the motif, where a father's guilt manifests itself in a masochistic and hysterical delight in his crimes and in a desire for his offspring to outdo him in sinning. There is some acute psychology in the portrayal of the twisting of a mind over-burdened with unresolved guilt.

336f. **et aliquid facite propter quod patrem/adhuc iuuet uixisse**

Cf. 305f. morique propero, dum in domo nemo est mea/ nocentior me. From wanting to die before his sons commit crimes to rival his, Oedipus now perversely wants his sons to perpetrate some evil which will make him glad to have lived up to now. Adhùc ... uixisse seems to refer to Oedipus' capitulation in 319. On propter quod, see Hirschberg ad loc.

337. **sic estis orti**

Sic is clearly an allusion to the incestuous nature of the union of which Eteocles and Polyneices were born; Oedipus says that the offspring of such impious parents cannot but themselves be wicked. It is noteworthy that the criminal tendencies of the brothers are ascribed entirely to heredity and that there is no mention of the traditional curse on the Theban royal house (see also on 297). Seneca would appear, in adapting the legend for the Romans of the first century AD, to have interpreted the curse genetically: it is transformed from being a punishment inflicted on the house of Thebes from outside by gods in whom the Romans, by and large, no longer believed, into the more sophisticated notion of the transfer of hereditary characteristics from generation to generation. See Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 313-14 and cf. Sen. Phaedr. where the question is raised between Phaedra and the Nurse: Phaedra attributes her impious passion both to a family tendency (113 fatale miserae matris agnosco malum) and to Venus' hatred of the Sun's descendants (124ff.); the Nurse rejects both notions, saying that love is not a god (195ff.) and that whereas Pasiphaë's unnatural passion could be ascribed to fate, Phaedra's lust is a crime to be attributed to a flaw in her character (143f.).

339. **tanta nobilitas**

See on 334f.

340ff. None of the deeds which Oedipus lists could be described as a scelus ... haut usitatum (338f.), since they are all part of the usual destruction of war. What makes each of them an unusual

crime, however, is the fact they they are not to be carried out by a foreign enemy, but by a native Theban and his brother (Oedipus attributes the destruction of Thebes to both his sons) against their own city. Cf. 565ff., where Jocasta begs Polyneices not to do just what Oedipus urges his sons to accomplish.
Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 100ff. for the series of plural imperatives; Fitch ad loc. notes also Pacuu. 350-52 R^2 Agite ite, euoluite rapite, coma/tractate per aspera saxa et humum,/scindite uestem ocius!

340. **penetrales deos**

= Penates, see Cic. ND 2.68 di Penates ... penetrales a poetis uocantur (Pease ad loc. gives further parallels: Tac. Ann. 2.10; Arn. 3.40; Isid. Etym. 8.11.99; Non. p.51M. (p.72 L.)), Sen. Oedip. 264f. iuro ../. perque penetrales deos. Walter (Interpretationen zum Römischen, 37) observes that the penates here are to be understood concretely as statues (so the lares mentioned in 344).

341. **frugemque flamma metite**

The metaphor whereby the destruction of crops is described as a harvest by flame is uniquely Senecan (see TLL 8.890.55f.). Cf. 563.

343. **disicite passim moenia**

See Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 123 and Hirschberg ad loc. for parallels to this use of disicio.

in planum date

= 'level to the ground'; cf. Luc. 1.383 in planum effundere muros. For in planum used figuratively, see Sen. Agam. 85 and Tarrant's note ad loc.

344. **templis deos obruite**

The idea seems to be derived from Ovid; cf. Ov. Fast. 6.437f. quo tempore Vesta/ arsit et est tectis obruta paene suis.

344f. **maculatos lares/conflate**

See on 340 penetrales deos and see Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 264 for Seneca's use of the specifically Roman lar.

Juvenal (13.153) condemns the morals of his day for being such that even the melting down of whole statues of Jupiter is an everyday occurrence. This is obviously an exaggeration, but the melting down of images by robbers and foreign invaders is not infrequently attested; see, e.g., Sen. Const. Sap. 4.2; Lucian Iupp. Conf. 8. In Suet. Nero 32.4, the emperor himself is accused of melting down statues made of gold and silver.

345. **ab imo tota considat domus**

Cf. Sen. Med. 981 uertite ex imo domum. For this sense of consido (= 'collapse'), cf. Verg. Aen. 2.624f. omne mihi uisum considere in ignis/ Ilium; Tac. Hist. 3.33 cum omnia sacra profanaque in igne considerent.

346. **concremetur**

Apart from this instance, concremo occurs in poetry only in Sen. Phaedr. 1215f. funebres una face/ ut concremarem prolis ac thalami rogos (TLL 4.92.77ff.). Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 73 notes that in both instances the verb form is -u-- (it could, of course, be -u-u before a vowel) and follows a monosyllable at the beginning of the verse, as is the norm with metrically equivalent compounds formed with con-. (The only uncomplicated position, in fact, for such a word is following an initial monosyllable: -u-u or ---u (but not --u-) can follow the first syllable of the second foot, giving a fourth foot caesura (e.g., Phoen. 512), but this is rare (see Drexler, Einführung in die Römische Metrik, 136, whose list of examples from Phoen. is not, however, exhaustive); -u-u is improbable after the initial syllable of the third foot because of Seneca's avoidance of an iambic fifth foot (see Drexler, ibid., 137; Costa on Sen. Med. 512)).

346f. **primus a thalamis meis/incipiat ignis**

For incipio ab, cf. Phoen. 410f. qui non est pius/incipiat a me and see OLD incipio 3. Oedipus' desire for his own bed-chamber to burn first, indicates his obsessive conviction that the criminal tendencies of his sons exist because they were born of an impious union (see also note on 337).

347ff. The verses (347b-49) should be allocated, like 320-27, to the Nuntius; see on 320ff.

347f. **Mitte uiolentum impetum/doloris**

On impetus, see Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 126 and Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 975, both of whom note, inter alia, the use of the word by the Stoics with reference to the emotions.

348. **exorent**

Jussive subjunctive. Exoro = 'win over'; cf. 496 where exoro has a personal subject. For exoro used with a non-personal subject, cf. Ov. Trist. 2.22 exorant magnos carmina saepe deos, Am. 3.11.43 facta merent adium, facies exorat amorem;; Sen. Ben. 5.25.4 rogamus, et illos uota non exorant, Ep. 78.21 si nihil [morbus] exorauerit, insigne prodis exemplum. The strong element of personification lends force to the Nuntius' plea.

349. **auctorque placidae liberis pacis ueni**

Miller's translation, 'go to thy sons as the adviser of calm peace', is unsatisfactory on two counts. Although auctor pacis can have the sense of 'adviser of peace' (so, e.g., Liv. 44.16.5 Is pacis semper auctor regi fuerat), it means more than that here: Oedipus is regarded as the 'bringer', the 'source' of peace (cf. Ov. Pont. 1.1.32 proderit auctorem pacis habere nihil; Sen. Herc. Fur. 250f. sensere terrae pacis auctorem suae/abesse terris), and not merely as its proponent. Liberis must be taken not with ueni, but with placidae ... pacis (for the combination, see Verg. Aen. 1.249) as a dative of advantage, '[... as the bringer] of calm peace to your sons'.

The use of ueni (= 'come' not 'go'), without an amplifying mecum, may lend support to the argument that 347-49 are spoken by the

Nuntius and not by Antigone: the former, who has just arrived from Thebes and is expected to return there, might well say simply ueni, but Antigone, who has been with her father on Cithaeron, would surely urge him either to go, i, to Thebes (alone) or to come mecum, since 'come' implies that the addressee will be accompanied by the speaker, which cannot be inferred as easily in Antigone's case as in that of the Nuntius.

350. **modestae deditum senem menti**

For senem, see note on senex 32 and on 320ff. For modestus (= 'temperate', 'restrained') used of a part of a human being, cf. Cic. Fam. 15.20.1 modestus eius uultus; Priap. 15.1 non satis modestas quicumque fur attulerit manus agello; Sen. Ira 3.6.1 sublimis animus ... modestus.

351. **placidae amantem pacis ad partes**

Oedipus echoes the placidae ... pacis of the Nuntius in 349. Pacis, as the word order suggests, is to be taken with both amantem and ad partes. Ad partes is used metaphorically, pax being personified as a contender in a dispute. The plural partes is frequently found when only a single faction is being referred to; see OLD pars 16a-d. Jakobi, Der Einfluss Ovids, 43 suggests that the phrase placidae amantem pacis, rare in poetry, is an echo of Ov. Am. 2.6.26 placidae pacis amator.

352. **tumet animus ira**

Tarrant on Sen. Thyest. 180 observes that 'it is typically Senecan

frankly to admit one's ira' and cites Med. 135f., Oedip. 519, Agam. 970 as examples. On Oedipus' ira in Phoen., see on 163.

For tumeo used of ira, cf. Sen. Ira 1.20.1 Ne illud quidem iudicandum est, aliquid iram ad magnitudinem animi conferre. Non est enim illa magnitudo: tumor est.

feruet immensum dolor

Immensum (A; E reads immensus) is an adverbial accusative; cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 981 saeuit horrendum and see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm, 123.

353. **casus et iuuenum furor**

Hendiadys for fortuitus furor. The combination of casus and iuuenum reduces the wickedness of the brothers almost to the level of an excess of youthful high spirits.

354f. **adhuc/ciuile bellum**

Adhuc (= 'so far', 'as yet') modifies ciuile. Miller translates well as '... war that as yet is between citizens.' The war is simply a ciuile bellum since there has as yet been no suggestion that the brothers will meet in direct conflict.

355. **frater in fratrem ruat**

This is the clause which is described as the curse of Oedipus upon his sons by almost all commentators, who are unduly influenced by the treatment of the legend in Greek drama, in which such a curse appears and is clearly identified in every case by the word ἀρά

or ἀρᾶι (see A. Th. 656, 695, 709, 833f., 886f., 943ff.; S. OC. 421ff., 1372ff.; E. Ph. 67f., 624, 876f., 1555ff.). Here, there is no mention of an imprecatio or a maledictum, and Oedipus' 'curse' is no more than an exhortation for his sons to commit what is, in his eyes, the most impious crime imaginable (cf. Sen. Thyest. 1110f. Vindices aderunt dei; his puniendum uota te tradunt mea, which is Seneca's restrained version of the traditional curse on Atreus by Thyestes and see Tarrant ad loc. for a discussion of the implications of the Senecan treatment).

This exhortation cannot be seen in isolation, since it, together with date arma matri (358), forms the climax of the catalogue of crimes which Oedipus urges his sons to commit, and is, indeed, the climax of the destructive fury which has raged in Oedipus since the beginning of the play and which now is extended from himself to his sons (see Friedrich, Senecas dramatischer Technik, 129f.). Opelt ('Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 278f.) sees the whole catalogue of crimes as encompassing a triple curse - against Thebes, the brothers and Jocasta. This is not convincing, because a) there is no mention of a curse or curses, and b) the tone of mingled self-hatred and destructive glee is not that of a curse. The use of a jussive subjunctive (ruat), rather than an imperative (as in 358) is not significant, since Seneca uses it also in 345-47, probably simply for the sake of variety.

Although frater in fratrem ruat is similar in content to the curse of Oedipus found in Greek drama (in E. Ph. likewise, the mutual slaughter of the brothers is implied rather than directly mentioned), it is not a curse but simply the conclusion of Oedipus' twisted desire for his sons to act in accordance with their (impious birth (334f., 338). Oedipus' curse in Greek tragedy forms part of the general curse on the house of Thebes and is an

external, supernatural force; Seneca transforms both the general curse on the house and the specific curse of Oedipus into a genetic phenomenon - a hereditary compulsion for evil (see also on 337) which manifests itself in each generation.

357. **de more nostro**

Leo (Obs. Crit., 220f.) points out that this phrase is unusual in poetry in that the preposition precedes the epithet; one would expect nostro de more as, e.g., at Verg. Aen. 7.357 solito ... de more; Ov. Met. 12.11 patrio de more; Sil. 8.671 nostro de more; cf., however, Verg. Aen. 11.142 de more uetusto.

358. **date arma matri**

Gronovius emended patri of the MSS to matri on the grounds that date arma patri makes no sense, since there would be no crime left for Oedipus to perform after the mutual murder of the brothers, and no-one left to arm him. Leo, who like all modern editors accepts Gronovius' emendation, argues more cogently that Oedipus' desire for a crime quod meas deceat toros (357) must involve his mother, and that he would hardly demand to be armed himself in view of what he says immediately afterwards - nemo me ex his eruat/ siluis (358f.) (Obs. Crit., 221). For MS confusion between mater and pater, see Liv. 1.56.11, Sen. Contr. 1.7.8.

What is implied by date arma matri is not clear, since the inference (drawn from the most obvious interpretation of arma dare), that the brothers are to arm Jocasta for combat in the coming battle, is suitably bizarre, but does not accord with Oedipus desire for a crime in his own style quod meos deceat toros

(357). Gronovius interpreted it as a reference to Jocasta's suicide, which is reasonable in that in E. Ph. Jocasta kills herself with a sword, but since her suicide is traditionally motivated by the deaths of Eteocles and Polyneices, for Oedipus here to urge the brothers to give weapons to Jocasta so that she can kill herself before she has reason to do so, makes little sense. Moreover, providing Jocasta with a suicide weapon would again not seem to be a nefas/ de more nostro, quod meos deceat toros (356f.). Date arma matri must imply not only something more dreadful than frater in fratrem ruat (355), of which Oedipus says nec hoc sat est (356), but also something appropriate to Oedipus' crimes and to his incest in particular. Opelt suggests plausibly ('Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 95) that what is referred to here is the sons' murder of their mother, which would certainly be a crime in the mould of Oedipus' scelera; date arma matri must then mean 'inflict violence on your mother' (for this sense of do with the dative, see OLD do 24a). Fantham's suggestion ('Incest and Fratricide', 65) that date arma matri refers to an incestuous assault by the sons on their mother, parallel to the notion of a sexual assault by Oedipus on Antigone expressed at 49f. is appealing, although it must be a secondary overtone. The metaphorical use of arma to refer to the penis is fairly well attested (see Verg. Cat. 3.15; Ov. Am. 1.9.26; Petr. Sat. 130.6; Mart. 6.73.6; Priap. 31.3), and although no parallel exists for arma dare connoting sexual violence, Fantham points to Sen. Agam. 32 per omnis liberos irem parens, where the use of ire per is only found elsewhere at Mart. 1.46.3 and Priap. 74.1, and the allusion to incest is similarly strained.

359. **rupis exesae cauo**

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 460 non latuit infans rupis exesae specu.

359ff. **latebo rupis exesae cauo/.../audiam**

Friedrich (Senecas dramatischer Technik, 132f.) points out that scenes in Roman comedy not infrequently end with a character stepping aside to overhear what takes place in the following scene, and he suggests that these verses give evidence of the influence of comedy on Senecan (and possibly Republican) tragedy. Aucupor commonly introduces comic scenes of eavesdropping (see, e.g., Plaut. Men. 570, Most. 473, Mil. 995), but as Tarrant observes (HSCPh 82 (1978), 250 n.155), the context here is very different to that found in comedy. He points out that aucupor occurs in the sense found here also in Republican tragedy (he cites Ennius Sc. 218(R^2)) and in later writers (e.g. Cic. Pis. 57 ut leuitatis est inanem aucupari rumorem; Ov. Her. 9.41 aucupor infelix incertae murmura famae) and suggests that these verses of Phoen. may have been influenced more by Ovid than by Plautus. It is not impossible, however, that the comic technique found its way, in a modified form, into Republican, and perhaps Augustan, tragedy, and from there into Seneca.

359ff. not only concludes this scene neatly, but it also provides a transition to the next scene (and second fragment) - Oedipus is disposed of, opening the way for the appearance of Jocasta in the role of mediator - which, as Friedrich observes (op. cit., 133), is a point in favour of the unity of the play (for a full discussion, see Intro., 7ff.). It is also an indication that, apart from the verse, or couple of verses, that may be lacking before 320 (see on 320), the scene, short as it is, is complete as it stands.

360. **saepe**

A saepes is a protective barrier or covering of some kind; in this context it is probably best translated as 'undergrowth'; Hirschberg ad loc. notes the prosaic nature of the phrase saepes densa.

361. **rumoris uagi**

Vagus here = 'vague', 'uncertain'. For the expression, cf. Ov. Met. 11.666f. non haec tibi nuntiat auctor/ ambiguus, non ista uagis rumoribus audis; Tac. Hist. 3.25 Vagus inde an consilio ducis subditus rumor, aduenisse Mucianum.

362. **quod possum**

Quod is used in a restrictive sense, = 'as far as'; for the expression, cf. Ter. Heaut. 416 quod potero adiutabo senem; Cic. Fam. 14.4.6 cura, quod potes, ut ualeas.

saeua ... bella ... audiam

= 'I shall hear of the fierce war' (cf. 361 aucupabor uerba rumoris) rather than 'I shall hear the fierce war' (for this use of audio, see OLD audio 8a; TLL 2.1271. 73ff.).

363ff. A has no change of scene at this point. E begins a new scene headed by the names: Jocasta, Satelles, Polyneices, Eteocles. E omits Antigone's name from the list of dramatis personae and the verses which A gives to Antigone (403-6, 414-18), E leaves unallocated. As Leo has pointed out (Obs. Crit., 82f.), Antigone's

name must be added to E's list of characters: 403-6 and 414-18 clearly belong to her, as parens (403) and mater (406, 416) indicate. (It would be perverse to argue that these verses belong to Ismene on the grounds of Antigone's promise not to leave Oedipus (55ff.; see Intro., 13). It seems also that the names of Polyneices and Eteocles should be deleted here, since they play no part in this act, and added before 443, where another change of scene occurs (see ad loc.)

There must, of course, be a change of scene at 363. The new scene should probably be imagined as taking place on the battlements of the royal palace in Thebes, since the setting is clearly one which affords a good view of the battlefield (see Intro., 40); cf. the τειχοσκοπία in E. Ph. 101ff., where, however, the location of the scene is explicitly stated (88-91) and the basis for the ability of the paidagogos to see offstage is established.

There is little justification for Farnaby's statement: Multa desunt in fine praecedentis Actus. Deest etiam huius Actus tertii principium. Both scenes are exceptionally short, but the transition from one to another is smoothly achieved (see on 359ff.) and there is no indication of a large lacuna in the text.

The first half of Phoen. (1-362) features Oedipus, with Antigone and the Nuntius (see 320ff. on the allocation of 320-27 and 347-49) as his foils, in the second part of the play (363-664) Jocasta is the main character, with the Satelles, Antigone, Polyneices and Eteocles playing secondary roles. This arrangement makes it clear that Seneca's main concern was not to write a drama about the battle of the seven against Thebes, but to use the legendary material in a new way - as the background for an examination of the reactions of the parents to their sons' strife. Hence the parallelism between the two halves of the play (see further,

Intro.,8ff.); this is reinforced here with the opening of the second part by a lament of Jocasta (363-86), which balances the emotional speech of Oedipus (1-50) with which the play begins.

The exclamation, felix Agaue, instantly establishes Jocasta's misery, since any woman who could describe as 'fortunate' a mother who unknowingly dismembered her own son, must be truly wretched. The reference to the crime of Agaue creates a link between Jocasta and Oedipus (and, consequently, between the two fragments of the play), since, not only do they both mention it in their respective opening speeches (see 15ff.), but, more strikingly, they both envy the crime: Oedipus wishes that his mother had killed him as Agaue killed her son (25f.), and Jocasta envies Agaue, whose guilt she considers to be light by comparison with her own.

In 377ff. Seneca presents Jocasta's predicament as a mini-suasoria on the theme: a mother is torn between her two sons, one of whom has been wronged by his brother and is now preparing to commit the impiety of attacking his own city, and the other of whom stands as the defender of his city, but is responsible for the violence which threatens it, since he wronged his brother. The attention which Seneca devotes here to the misery of Jocasta's dilemma points to his principal interest in the conflict of the brothers: the feelings and reactions of their mother.

363f. facinus gestavit

See Hirschberg ad loc. on the expression: the abstract facinus is given a concrete sense by gestauit.

364. spolium

Cf. E. Ba. 1200f. σὴν νικηφόρον/... ἄγραν ; Ov. Met. 4.614f. (of Medusa's head) at alter/ uiperei referens spolium memorabile monstrum. Agaue, in her Bacchic frenzy, thinks that Pentheus is a wild animal (a lion in E. Ba., a boar in Ov. Met.), and she describes his slaughter as though it were a hunting victory (so, e.g., Sen. Herc. Fur. 1150f. cur latus laeuum uacat/ spolio leonis?).

366f. sed misera non ultra suo/sceleri occucurrit

A has ultra suum/ scelus hoc cucurrit, E has ultra suo/ sceleri occurrit. Gronovius added the syllable -cu- to occurrit in E, thereby rendering the version of E metrically acceptable. Heinsius followed Gronovius, but emended ultra to ultro, citing in support of ultro: Sen. Phaedr. 441f., Oedip. 964 and Ep. 13 inter alia (Aduers., 55). As Carlsson (Class. et Med. (1949), 45f.) has pointed out, however, Heinsius' emendation does not fit well into the context. The point of Jocasta's comparison between herself and Agaue, says Carlsson, is to stress the differences between them, as the opening words of the speech, felix Agaue, reveal. The one thing that Agaue has in common with Jocasta is that she also committed a crime - fecit scelus (366) - involving her son. Having established this, however, Jocasta proceeds to point out how Agaue's situation differs from her own, beginning with the adversative sed. Heinsius' emendation is incompatible with the adversative, since it implies similarity rather than contrast: Jocasta, like Agaue, did not commit her crime of her own free will and with full knowledge of what she was doing. The sense of the reading of E must be: 'but the unfortunate woman did not subsequently come upon her crime', i.e. Agaue killed Pentheus and

therefore did not have contact with him after she had committed her crime, whereas Jocasta constantly 'comes upon' her crime (by report or physically) in the form of her husband and sons. The version of E is preferable to that of A, since ultra suum/scelus hoc cucurrit seems to be a rather tortuous way of saying 'she did not commit any further crime'. In addition, the second hoc in 367 is awkward if A's hoc is correct and either hoc or suum of A seems redundant. For the preposition, ultra, used with a noun that does not indicate space or time, cf., e.g., Verg. Aen. 6.114 uiris ultra sortemque senectae; Hor. Od. 3.29.31f. si mortalis ultra/ fas trepidat; Sen. Agam. 996 mortem aliquid ultra est.

367ff. hoc leue est/.../peperi nocentes

Jocasta's piling up of personal guilt parallels that of Oedipus at 270ff. and she, like Oedipus (see on 270 leue est paternum facinus), dismisses as trivial her first scelus. Her perception of her pollution is similar to Oedipus': she considers herself nocens although her crimes were committed in ignorance (see on 203ff. and Zwierlein, Senecas Hercules im Lichte, 35ff. on the different understandings of nocens in Sen. Herc. Fur.).

368. feci nocentes

Sc. alios. The plural is emphatic (see Axelson, Korruptelenkult, 17) since Jocasta is referring only to Oedipus, whom she has implicated in her crime.

369. peperi nocentes

Cf. 338 sic estis orti; Jocasta, like Oedipus, sees the wickedness of the brothers as being directly related to their origins and, like him, she regards as her most heinous crime the involvement of her children in the family nefas.

369f. derat aerumnis meis

Sc. adhuc. For deesse followed by ut and the subjunctive in a subject clause, see also Sen. Phaedr. 1186f. hoc derat nefas,/ut uindicato sancta fruereris toro; Capitol. Gord. 31.2 nec defuit, ut senatus falleretur cf. Sen. Contr. 1.7.5 hoc ... ad fabulas deerat, ut narraretur aliquis solutus a piratis (where the ut-clause is in apposition to hoc). In Sen. Troad. 888 derat is followed by an infinitive.

370. et hostem amarem

Polyneices is a hostis, a public enemy, since he has declared war on Thebes. On the idea of loving an enemy, see Hirschberg ad loc.

370f. bruma ter posuit niues/... Ceres

Seneca employs the conventional poetic device of designating the years by the seasons; cf. Hor. Od. 1.11.4; Sen. Troad. 73; Juv. 4.92. Neither Sophocles nor Euripides specifies the length of Polyneices' exile as precisely as does Seneca, but three years would seem to be plausible: one year of voluntary exile while Eteocles was reigning (cf. E. Ph. 71f.) and two years during which Polyneices tried to persuade Eteocles to give up the throne,

failed, married Adrastus' daughter and began preparations for war against his brother. If one assumes that Oedipus abdicated as soon as the truth of his identity and his crimes was discovered, three years is also the period that has elapsed since the anagnorisis.

370. bruma ter posuit niues

Cf. Hor. Od 3.10.7 positas ... niues; Ov. Fast. 2.72 posita sub niue terra latet; Sen. QN. 5.10.2 niues et ponuntur et durant.

371. et tertia iam falce decubuit Ceres

Cf. Ov. Am. 1.15.12 cadet incurua falce resecta Ceres. Billerbeck (Senecas Tragödien, 76 para. 162) suggests that Seneca's use of decumbo with reference to corn (in earlier authors it is used only of persons lying on beds or cushions) was influenced by the descriptions of gladiators mortally wounded by the spear (cf. falce). This use of decumbo, further, brings out the personification in Ceres.

372. ut exul errat natus et patria caret

The influence of Ov. Trist. 4.6.19f. is discernible here: ut patria careo, bis frugibus area trita est,/dissiluit nudo pressa bis uua pede. Cf. also Phoen. 586f.

For ut = 'while', see, e.g., Calp. Ecl. 7.2; Val. Fl. 6.462 (OLD ut 25).

374. **gener est Adrasti**

Seneca, like Sophocles, avoids explaining the circumstances of Polyneices' marriage to Adrastus' daughter, but Euripides tells of the oracle given to Adrastus and of how he saw Polyneices and Tydeus as being the fulfillment of it (E. Ph. 409ff.; so also, in even greater detail, Stat. Theb. 1.395ff.).

374f. **cuius imperio mare/quod scindit Isthmos regitur**

This clause apparently reflects the view, commonly held in antiquity as well as in modern times, that Argos ruled a vast empire in Dark Age Greece. This idea seems to have its origin in Homer (Il. 2.108, 559-68; see Kelly, Hist. of Argos, 38ff.), although our chief sources for an Argive empire are Ephorus, quoted by Strabo (8.3.33), and Pausanias (4.3.45). Kelly points out, however, that the archaeological evidence, although limited, does not support the notion of an Argive empire, but suggests rather 'that Argos was a small, self-sufficient village in the Argive plain, not the capital city of any wide ranging Dorian empire' (ibid., 37). He observes also that the simmple way of life in Dark Age Greece, which lacked sophisticated political institutions, would not have enabled a state to create and maintain an empire (ibid., 43). Seneca's belief in the size and power of Argos is probably the result of the designation in tradedy of Argos (as well as Mycenae) as the city of the great Agamemnon (on this, see Tarrant, Sen. Agam., 160f.). It may also have something to do with the fact that Argos is frequently used to refer, not only to the town of that name, but also, in a wider sense to the whole Argolid (Tarrant, ibid, 161).

mare/quod scindit Isthmos

A reads cingit Isthmon, E cingit Isthomos. Gronovius suggested scindit or findit Isthmos as an acceptable reading based on E. Although there is MS consensus on cingit, the fact that the Isthmos is described elsewhere in Senecan drama as 'dividing' the sea (see Herc. Fur. 336 and Thyest. 112f.) suggests that a word of similar meaning is needed here (though there seems little reason to prefer scindit to findit) and that a trace of the original reading has been preserved in the nominative Isthomos of E. See further Zwierlein, Philologus 113 (1969), 258.

376. **septemque ... regna**

In 326 there are said to be seven camps outside Thebes; in 373 Jocasta says that Polyneices asked for help from Greek kings (i.e. not Adrastus alone) and here mention is made of seven kingdoms which are supporting the exile. Seneca appears to be confused about the nature of the seven against Thebes (as does Statius who identifies them as Graiugenae reges (6.215; see also 12.549), although his use of rex may be mere hyperbole; see on 391). As is clear from Aesch. Th. 39ff. the seven were commanders of companies within Polyneices' Argive army and the division was made in this way because there were seven gates of Thebes to be assaulted (see also E. Ph. 737-39; Hyg. Fab. 68.1 and cf. 69.6 (based on Appollod. 3.58f.) where Adrastus himself is said to be one of the seven). See further on 391.

377. **generi**

The reading of E is genero: A has generi, which is probably correct

since the phrase ad/in auxilium invariably takes an objective genitive in all writers before Augustine (see TLL 2.1625.37ff.); cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 631f. nemo ad Herculeae domus/auxilia uenit (see Hirschberg ad loc.). Genero may have entered the text as the result of an unconscious association with the common formula esse/uenire auxilio + dative of advantage.

decernam

Here = constituam; cf. Plaut. Curc. 703 si quidem uoltis, quod decreuero, facere; Cic. Tusc. 3.65 num quis igitur quicquam decernit inuitus? (TLL 5.141.65ff.).

378. **causa**

See also 384. On causa as being one of the expressions reflecting Roman legal and juridical thought in Senecan drama, see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 54f.

378f. **causa repetentis bona est,/mala sic petentis**

Jocasta recognizes that Polyneices has a just grievance since he has been cheated out of his share of the kingship by Eteocles, but the wrong that has been done to him does not justify his waging war against Thebes. Cf. Oedipus' attitude expressed in 296f. and see note ad loc.

380. **utrimque**

Utrumque of the MSS is weak. Bentley's suggestion, utrimque, gives

considerably improved sense: the whole reason for Jocasta's dilemma, elaborated in the following verses, is that her sons are on opposite sides. The error, resulting from the misreading of a single vowel, probably under the influence of natum (380), is a simple one.

381f. **nil possum pie/pietate salua**

The juxtaposition of pie and pietate highlights the paradox. For the expression salua pietas, see Ov. Met. 15.109; Sen. Ep. 81.16.

383. **affectu pari**

Cf. 461 in utramque partem ducor affectu pari. For affectus = amor, see OLD affectus 7a; TLL 1.1190.20ff.

384. **quo causa melior sorsque deterior trahit**

Jocasta has two reasons for favouring Polyneices: the fact that he has a just grievance and the fact that he has suffered in exile (sors deterior). On causa melior, see Hirschberg ad loc.

385. **inclinat animus semper infirmo fauens**

Seneca reveals a sensitive perception of the protectiveness of maternal love. Hirschberg ad loc. notes that the same idea occurs in Sen. Ep. 66.27 quoniam quidem etiam parentium amor magis in ea quorum miseretur inclinat.

386. **miseros magis fortuna conciliat suis**

Fortuna here = infelicitas, res aduersae. Sententiae about fortune, good or otherwise, are a commonplace of both poetry and prose; see TLL 6.181.72ff. This particular sententia prompts one to contrast the attitude of Oedipus, from whose mind nothing could be further than family solidarity.

On 'terminal' sententiae in Senecan tragedy, see on 197f.

387ff. **regina/.../arma matris oppositu impedi**

E ascribes these verses to a Satelles, A to a Nuntius. The internal evidence suggests that the speaker is a Satelles, an old retainer: the tone of 387f. is impatient, familiar and reproving (see further on regina 387), while that of 401f. is informal and bossy - both passages are such as one might expect from a trusted servant of long standing rather than from an official Nuntius. The scene bears some resemblance to the τειχοσκοπία in E. Ph. 101ff. (Tarrant, HSCPh 82 (1978), 252f. observes that it is also similar to Plaut. Rud. 160ff.) in terms of the setting (see on 363ff.) and the description of the activity on the battlefield (388ff.); possibly the persona of the Satelles too is based upon that of the old man in the Euripidean play see Intro., 40). The description of the speaker as a Nuntius may result from confusion caused by A's failure to recognize a change of scene at 363. See Zwierlein, WüJbb. 4 (1978), 147.

387. **regina**

The Satelles' use of Jocasta's title rather than her name is in conformity with his status as a servant (cf. the initial form of

address employed by Nutrices to their mistresses in Sen. Phaedr. 129, Agam. 125). The position of regina as the first word of the speech and of the line suggests urgency; cf. Sen. Agam. 203, Med. 380 (alumna).

387ff. **dum tu flebiles questus cies/terisque tempus**

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 633 cur diem questu tero?; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1774 quid diem questu tero? For questus cieo, cf. Stat. Silu. 5.2.160 questus solitos si forte ciebo.

388f. **saeua nudatis stetit/acies in armis**

A reads tota, E salua, corrected by Gronovius to saeua. Both saeua and tota make sense, but saeua is rhetorically more effective: it is more emotive and the 's' sound contributes to the overall effect of the accumulation of sibilants. It is difficult to see how saeua could have been corrupted to tota; this may be an instance of the deliberate alteration for which A is notorious (see Tarrant, Sen. Agam. 62f.; Zwierlein, Krit. Komm, 124).

Stetit of A appears as adest in E. Here it seems that A has preserved the correct reading; cf. Sen. Oedip. 586f. saeua prosiluit cohors/et stetit in armis omne uipereum genus. On the present sense of stetit, see Zwierlein, ibid., who cites Sen. Oedip. 303 (Opima sanctas uictima ante aras stetit) as a parallel.

nudatis .../in armis

Miller translates 'with bared swords' but in shows that not just swords are meant; rather nudatis in armis, means 'amid weapons at

the ready' (lit. 'uncovered'), armis implying the full range of siege weaponry. Nudo is elsewhere used of swords (see, e.g., Liv. 28.33.5; Stat. Theb 1.429; OLD nudo 1d) and this seems to be an extension of that usage.

389. **aera iam bellum cient**

For the expression, see Verg. Aen. 1.541 (cf. 6.165); Vell. 2.54.2.

390. **aquilaque pugnam signifer mota uocat**

The most strikingly Roman element in the description of the battle scene; see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 127 esp. n. 248.

pugnam signifer ... uocat

= 'the standard-bearer calls for battle'; for this use of uoco, see OLD uoco 6.

391. **septena reges bella dispositi parant**

On the distributive, septena, see Hirschberg ad loc. Rex may be being used hyperbolically of the chieftains in charge of the seven contingents (cf. Verg. Aen. 1.544, 6.55, 7.220, where Aeneas is described as rex), but Seneca seems to be confused about the composition of the seven companies (see on 376) and, in view of 373 and 376, could well be thinking of them as troops from seven separate kingdoms, led by seven kings.

392. **Cadmea progenies**

The reference is to the people of Thebes in general rather than specifically to the sons of Oedipus. Seneca uses Cadmeus as a synonym for Thebanus (cf. Oedip. 29f. Cadmeae ./. . genti, Herc. Fur. 268 Cadmea proles).

393. **cursu citato**

Cf. 28 cursu incito.

miles

Collective singular metri gratia; see further on 574.

394f. **uide ut ... abscondat ./.. erigat**

A reads uide ut ... abscondat ... erigat, while the version of E is uiden ut ... abscondit ... erigat, which is metrically impossible as well as being syntactically inconsistent. Lachmann (on Lucr. 3.941, 194) suggested that E should read uiden? atra nubes ..., omitting ut and presumably (although he does not mention it) changing erigat to erigit. There is, however, no good reason to follow Lachmann (as Leo, Herrmann and Moricca have done), since the reading of A is perfectly acceptable (cf. Sen. Troad. 945 uide ut animus ingens laetus audierit necem). The MS consensus on erigat suggests that abscondit in E is a scribal error resulting from the proximity of diem, and the addition of -n to uide was probably due to a scribe's (mis)interpretation of uide ut as a question. The Satelles should probably be thought of as having drawn Jocasta towards him, so that he can point out to her the various activities

on the battlefield. Tarrant observes (HSCPh 82 (1978), 253) that the description by the Satelles (and by Antigone in 414ff.) of offstage action closely resembles Sceparnio's account of the offstage landing of Palaestra and Ampelisca in Plaut. Rud. 160ff., which, he suggests, could be a comic adaptation of a feature in fourth-century tragedy which Seneca also adopted.

394. **atra nubes puluere**

The notion that the sun, the source of life, is hidden from view by the dust contributes to the fearful nature of the scene which the Satelles describes; cf. Luc. 4.767f., where the defeat of the Roman infantry in North Africa is heralded by the obscuring of the sun by clouds of dust.

395f. **fumoque .../nebulas**

For the association of dustclouds and smoke, cf. Sil. 2.658f. erigit atro/ nigrantem fumo rogus ... nubem; Amm. 24.8.5 fumus uel uis quaedam turbinata pulueris apparebat.

396. **equestri fracta quas tellus pede**

Fracta here = 'churned up'; cf. 545f. equitatu leui/ Cadmea frangi prata; Petr. Sat. 123.204 horrida securis frangebat gressibus arua; Stat. Theb. 6.640 raptaque non fracto uestigia puluere pendent.

397. **si uera metuentes uident**

Cf. Sen. Oedip. 204 an aeger animus falsa pro ueris uidet? The

implication here seems to be that fear can cause the sense of sight to become unreliable.

398. **infesta fulgent signa**

Infesta ... signa = 'standards raised for battle'; cf. Cic. Phil. infesta ... patriae signa a Brundisis inferebat; Luc. 3.330f. aquilas infestaque signa relinquas/ urbe procul. For fulgere used of standards, cf., e.g., Liv. 28.14.10; Ov. Met. 13.700; Sil. 12.11 (see TLL 6.1510.20f. for further examples).

398f. **subrectis adest/ frons prima telis**

Frons here = prima acies (OLD frons 6a); for the expression prima frons, cf., e.g., Liv. 6.13.3 impulsa frons prima et trepidatio subsidiis inlata; Luc. 7.521 cum Caesar, metuens ne frons sibi prima labaret...

Subrectis ... telis = 'with raised weapons'; so Liv. 7.10.10 Romanus mucrone subrecto ... uentrem ... hausit. Cf. Sen. Ben. 5.15.5 where subrigo is used of flags.

399. **aurea clarum nota**

Aurea nota = 'golden letters'. Nota (abl.) is a collective singular; the full expression, notae litterarum, is frequently abbreviated to notae (OLD nota 6b). Clarum qualifies nomen, but is best translated as an adverb: '... the names of the leaders clearly written in golden letters'. Clarum reveals the proximity of the enemy forces: if the Satelles could see the names clearly written, the uexilla could not have been very far away.

400. **uexilla**

The uexillum was a military banner made of cloth, which, in Seneca's day, was used as an ensign by various detachments, while the aquila was the ensign of the whole legion (see Dio 40.18.1-3). Here, Seneca is envisaging the seven companies of men, each with its own uexillum, on which the name of its commander is written (cf. Tac. Hist. 2.85.1 laceratisque uexillis nomen Vitellii praeferentibus). Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 68 para. 137 notes that uexillum does not occur in poetry before Seneca (see also Sen. Agam. 40) but that it is regularly used by the Flavian poets.

401. **I, redde amorem fratribus, pacem omnibus**

For the idea that amity between the brothers means peace for all, cf. 290ff.

402. **matris oppositu**

Oppositus is used either literally of the placing of a material barrier (so, e.g., Sil. 10.211 agmina ... oppositu membrorum sistere certat) or figuratively of verbal opposition (so, e.g., Val. Max. 3.8 ext. 3 oppositu eius [sc. Socrates] legitima grassari uia prohibita). Either the literal or the figurative meaning could be implied here. The figurative sense would probably be more appropriate coming from a servant, but in the following speech by Antigone it is clear that she takes the Satelles' injunction literally from her words: nudum inter enses pectus infestos tene (405).

403ff. On Antigone's presence in Thebes, see on 363ff. and Intro., 13.

403. perge, o parens

The vocative here, as commonly, throws into relief the word which precedes it. The sense of urgency thus given to perge, which gains additional force from being the first word of speech and verse, is reinforced by the string of imperatives which follow it: concita (403), compesce (404), excute (404), tene (405), solue (406), excipe (406).

et concita celerem gradum

This is the reading of A. E reads perge et concita cursu celerem gradum, which is metrically impossible. Leo, with his strong bias in favour of E, emended to perge et cita celerem gradum, unnecessarily, since the version of A is clearly correct (for the expression gradum/cursus concitare, Man. 5.577; Sen. Ep. 114.3 and cf. Sen. Phaedr. 902 concitum celeri pede, Agam. 388 uasto concitus miles gradus) and the addition of perge in E is a simple case of diplography, with cursu being perhaps a gloss on celerem gradum. Drexler (Einführung in die Römische Metrik, 136) notes that this verse (adopting the reading of A) is the only one in Senecan drama where there is no fourth-foot caesura following a word-break after the second arsis (the usual pattern being that found in Herc. Fur. 117: ab in/feris/ reuer/sus.//hic/ prosit/ mihi). Seneca may thus have intended the metre here to be expressive by allowing concita celerem gradum to flow uninterruptedly.

405. nudum inter enses pectus infestos tene

This is the climax of the tricolon and it provides the explanation of how an elderly woman is to hold back the weapons of two entire armies: she will act as a human buffer between the opposing forces (see also 408 stabo inter arma). The prominent position of nudum stresses

Jocasta's vulnerability among the enses infestos. Miller is probably correct to translate nudum as 'bared' and not simply as 'unarmed': Jocasta is to be imagined as offering her naked breast to the raised swords of her sons.

406. **aut solue bellum, mater, aut prima excipe**

Soluo is not elsewhere found with bellum, but cf. Luc. 10.262 soluere litem; Stat. Achil. 2.51 electus formae certamina soluere pastor. Excipe = 'sustain the force of' (OLD excipio 11a).

The vocative, mater, is given slight emphasis as the first word after the caesura; it creates a significant pause before the second aut clause, in which the probably consequence of the failure of Jocasta's desperate attempt at reconciling her sons is baldly and shockingly stated.

407. **Ibo, ibo**

Cf. 12, where ibo, ibo occurs, spoken by Oedipus. A certain parallelism between the situations of Oedipus and Jocasta has already been established: both are appealed to by outsiders (a Nuntius and a Satelles respectively) to reconcile the brothers and both are urged to do so by Antigone. With the utterance of ibo, ibo by Jocasta, the parallelism of situation becomes an implicit comparison between the respective attitudes of Oedipus and Jocasta towards the fraternal conflict: ibo, ibo spoken by Oedipus is an announcement of his intention to find death on Cithaeron (as others in his family have done), despite his knowledge of the impending war between his sons; when Jocasta says ibo, ibo she is announcing her intention to find death, but only if she cannot stop the war between her sons. Jocasta does not desire death, but she is willing to die in an attempt to reconcile her sons; Oedipus is not

interested in preventing the fraternal war and his longing for death is, at least in part, an attempt to avoid facing the reality of the conflict and its consequences (see 303ff.); even when he has renounced suicide, he is prepared to do no more than catch word of the war from his hiding-place (359ff).

armis obium opponam caput

Cf. Sen. Agam. 231 oppone cunctis uile suppliciis caput, 946 ultro uulneri opponam caput.

Caput here = 'life'; cf., e.g., Ter. And. 677 capitis periculum adite; Ov. Fast. 3.426 cognatum, Vesta, tuere caput (OLD caput 4a).

408f. **petere qui fratrem uolet,/ petat ante matrem**

The word-order is effective: the parallel positioning of petere and petat and the withholding of matrem until the end of the sentence emphasises the fact that only by murdering their mother will the brothers be able to attack each other.

The clustering of references to Jocasta's motherhood in 403ff. is noticeable: Antigone addresses her as parens (403) and mater (403) and Jocasta refers to herself as matrem (409) and matre (410). It is as their mother that Jocasta intends to appeal to the brothers, and the emphasis is on the respect due to her motherhood.

409f. **pius/... pius**

The anaphora stresses the issue: whether or not Jocasta's sons will obey her, as filial piety demands that they should. In E. Ph., where the situation is less urgent, since the brothers are not yet

on the battlefield, Jocasta can afford a lengthy denunciation of ambition and sovereignty and an exaltation of equality (528ff.); in Sen. Phoen., the time for rational argument is past and Jocasta must use her trump-card, her position as their mother.

411. feruidos iuuenes anus

See Hirschberg ad loc. on the juxtaposition of iuuenes and anus.

anus

Jocasta refers to herself sixteen times in this fragment, twice as parens (379, 457) and thirteen times as mater (409, 410, 450, 456, 459, 473, 477, 485, 495, 525, 531, 578, 623); this is thus the only occasion on which she does not refer to herself as a mother. Cf. Oedipus' references to himself: leaving aside the two occasions when he refers to himself by name (89, 312), and the one when he simply calls himself miser (49), Oedipus constantly refers to himself in terms of his paternity, as pater (3, 49, 95, 98, 121, 230, 301, 333, 336), parens (1, 295) or genitor (93), with the exception of 32 and 350, where he alludes to himself as senex. In the latter case, as here, the contrast is between the age of the parent (although Oedipus must be considerably younger than Jocasta; on the question of Oedipus' age, see note on 32 senex) and the youth of the sons. In view of the fact that both senex and anus are deviations from the usual pattern of self-reference by both characters, and of the parallelism and contrast implicit in the two fragments of the play, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Seneca may have intended anus to recall senem in 350 (cf. also feruidos in 411 and feruet in 352) and thereby to prompt a further

comparison (see also on 407 ibo, ibo) between the respective attitudes of Oedipus and Jocasta towards the fraternal conflict.

tenebo

For teneo = 'to restrain', cf., e.g., Cic. Off. 2.24 si aliter teneri non possunt famuli ; Ov. Fast. 1.425f. animamque tenens uestigia ./.. fert taciturna (OLD teneo 19a).

413f. aut si aliquiod .../non fiet unum

E reads aliquot, A quod. It would seem that A has preserved the correct ending, -quod, but has lost the prefix ali-. See further Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 124.

The assertion in these verses is ominous-sounding but opaque: Jocasta has declared that if one brother wants to kill the other, he will have to kill her first (408f.), since she will stand between them (407f.); she now considers the possibility that aliquod nefas may be committed in her sight, and states that if this occurs, it will not be the only nefas. Either aliquod and non ... unum refer to the respective deaths of both brothers, in which case Jocasta is assuming a prophetic role, or, more likely, aliquod refers to the death of one or both brothers or perhaps simply to the joining of battle, and unum to Jocasta's own death by suicide (so Farnaby). In other words, if the murder of one or both brothers occurs despite Jocasta's having placed herself between them, she will kill herself, which would be a nefas because it would be tantamount to matricide. The half-line contributes to the sense of something only hinted at and not fully explained; cf., e.g., Sen. Herc. Fur. 1271f. uincatur mea/fortuna dextra; Med.

424f. inuadam deos/et cuncta quatiam; Phaedr. 671 miserere amantis.

414f. **signa collatis micant/uicina signis**

Collatis ... signis is dative, depending on uicina: '... near to the standards which have been brought up against them ...' For the gleaming standards, cf. 398 infesta fulgent signa. For signa ... micant uicina, cf. Ov. Fast. 2.189 signa propinqua micant.

415. **clamor hostilis**

Hirschberg ad loc. cites Liv. 1.29.2 as a parallel.

416. **occupa, mater, preces**

= 'get in first with your prayers, mother', i.e. before the threatening scelus becomes a reality. For this sense of occupo, cf. Sen. Agam. 193 scelus occupandum est (see Tarrant ad loc.); [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 883f. aemuli, Iuno, tui/ mortem occupaui (spoken by Deineira). Occupa is the most important word in the verse; it is given slight emphasis by its position immediately after the caesura, and the apostrophe, mater, causes additional stress to fall on it.

417. **et ecce motos fletibus credas meis**

Credas is jussive (cf. Sen. Phaedr. 477 sed fata credas deesse) and the implication of this verse, as Gruter observed (scilicet Antigone ab exercitu ad matrem cucurrit ...), is that Antigone has

already pleaded with her brothers (perhaps on her way back to Thebes after leaving Oedipus). Alternatively it may be consecutive, depending on sic ... uenit (418). For motos fletibus, cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1274 mouere fletu.

418. **armis ... compositis**

On the combination, see Hirschberg ad loc. who suggests that it has its origin in Hor. Od. 4.14.51f. te caede gaudentes Sygambri/ compositis uenerantur armis.

419. **Procedit acies tarda, sed properant duces**

Cf. Verg. Aen. 9.47 Turnus, ut ante uolans tardum praecesserat agmen.

The MSS do not indicate a change of speaker at this point, but most modern editors correctly give the line to the Satelles (Bothe gives it to a Nuntius), Giardina being a notable exception.

420. **procellae turbine insanae**

Insanae, the reading of A (E has insano) is supported by Sen. Thyest. 636f. ferte me insanae procul,/ ... procellae and Phaedr. 736 Fugit insanae similis procellae (see further Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 124; Hirschberg ad loc. observes that the speakers in Thyest. and Phaedr. simply want to escape from their situation and do not, like Jocasta, have a definite destination in view (this is the case also in Sen. Thyest. 623f. cited below).

420f. Quis me procellae ./.. aget

Cf. Sen. Thyest. 623f. Quis me per auras turbo praecipitem uehet/atraque nube inuoluet ....

421. auras ... aetherias

Cf., e.g., Ov. AA. 2.59f. aetherias ... per auras/ibimus; Lucr. 3.405 uiuit et aetherias uitalis suscipit auras (TLL 1.1153.58ff.).

422ff. Sphinx .../Stymphalis/.../Harpyia

The agents which Jocasta calls upon to carry her to the battlefield are all large and powerful, but exceedingly unpleasant: the Sphinx (who was winged) is said to have killed those who could not answer her riddle; the Stymphalian birds, killed by Hercules, are said either to have destroyed crops (DS. 4.13.2) or to have had sharp feathers which wounded those who approached them (Ap. Rhod. 2.1089f.), or to have been man-eaters (Paus. 8.22.4f.); the Harpies were repulsively filthy bird-like monsters (Ap. Rhod. 2.188ff.). The incongruous idea that these creatures, whose involvement with men was traditionally to the detriment of the latter, should perform a helpful action reveals the extent of Jocasta's distraction (see 427) (cf. Hirschberg ad loc. who says of the disagreeable associations of the winged creatures: 'Die erzeugte düstere Stimmung passt vorzüglich in den Zusammenhang des Bruderkrieges'.).

422. quae Sphinx

The mention of the Sphinx here is noteworthy: it was through

solving the riddle of the Sphinx that Oedipus previously saved Thebes from that monster; now, paradoxically, Jocasta calls on the same monster to help her save Thebes.

422. **atra nube subtexens diem**

= 'screening the sun with its dark cloud'. By this phrase, Seneca suggests not only the great size of the Stymphalian bird, but also its ominous nature, since it shuts out the sun, the source of light and life.

423. **praepetem**

Translate as 'swiftly'; English cannot reflect the sense of the Latin, which expresses the nature of the movement of winged creatures (OLD praepes 2A) Cf., e.g., Verg. Aen. 6.15 praepetibus pennis ausus se credere caelo; Stat. Theb. 2.39f. praepetis alae/ plausus.

auidis ... pennis

The reference to the 'eager wings', a combination not found elsewhere (see Hirschberg ad loc.) of the Stymphalis may be an ironical reminder of one of their traditional destructive attributes (see on 422ff.).

424f. **rapiet .../Harpyia**

On the word-play, see Hirschberg ad loc.

425. **saeui regis obseruans famem**

The reference is to the Thracian king, Phineus, who offended the gods and was punished by having the Harpies inflicted upon him. These creatures descended on, and carried off, his food every time he was about to eat, fouling what they left so that it was inedible. He was dying of starvation when the Argonauts arrived and made an agreement with him, whereby they would rid him of the Harpies if he would help them in their quest for the Golden Fleece (see Ap. Rhod. 2.178ff.; Apollod. 1.120ff.; Val. Fl. 4.423ff.; Hyg. Fab. 19). Legend contains no evidence that Phineus was a fierce or cruel king; hence the epithet saeuus should probably be translated as 'frantic'; cf. Oedip. 925 and 1004, where saeuus is used with this sense of Oedipus and Jocasta respectively. On obseruans famem, see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 425.

426. **et inter acies proiciet raptam duas**

One must imagine Jocasta to be hurrying from the stage as she speaks this last line.

427ff. **Vadit furenti similis/.../potest**

Theses verses are unique in classical drama in terms of dramatic technique. Not only does Seneca flout the convention whereby offstage action is reported to the audience by a witness (frequently a messenger) subsequent to the completion of the action (as do Aeschylus in Supp. 713ff. and Euripides in Ph. 101ff.), but, by making the Satelles describe Jocasta's dash from the walls of Thebes to the battlefield as it is taking place (cf. Sen. Agam. 867ff., where Cassandra describes on stage the events which are

occurring at the fatal banquet offstage, inside the palace), he achieves an unparalleled (and, according to Zwierlein (Rezitationsdramen, 34, 107f.), unstageable; see Intro., 67f.) change of scene: the Satelles report ends with Jocasta's arrival on the battlefield, which is the setting of the scene which follows (443ff.). As Tarrant observes (HSCPh 82 (1978), 252), this 'transition speech' combines the properties of narrative and dramatic poetry; he notes Sen. Phaedr. 580-86 and Agam. 775-81 as other instances of a 'narrative' transition between scenes. One might also compare Med. 382-96, where the Nurse's words provide a transition from Medea's interview with Creon to the scene in which she plans her vengeance.

427. **Vadit furenti similis aut etiam furit**

For parallels to this contrast between the appearance and the reality, see Hirschberg ad loc. who cites, inter alia, Verg. Aen. 6.454 aut uidet aut uidisse putat per nubila lunam; Ov. Met. 6.667f. corpora Cecropidum pennis pendere putares:/pendebant pennis, 13.607 et primo similis uolucri, mox uera uolucris.

furenti similis

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1009 Megara furenti similis ... fugit and see further Hirschberg ad loc.

428f. **sagitta qualis Parthica velox manu/excussa fertur**

A striking instance of Roman colouring: the mounted archers of the Parthians were their strongest military weapon, as Crassus had discovered (see Dio 40.12ff.), and the fatal speed and accuracy of the 'Parthian shot' was well-known. For references in poetry to Parthian arrows, see, e.g., Hor. Od. 2.13.17f; Ov. Rem. Am. 157; Sen. Thyest. 383f.; Stat. Theb. 6.597; for Parthian arrows used in a comparison to express speed, cf. Verg. Georg. 4.313f.; Luc. 1.230; and esp. Verg. Aen. 12.856ff., where the speed of a Parthian arrow describes the flight of one of the Dirae from heaven to the battlefield: non secus ac neruo per nubem impulsa sagitta,/... Parthus quam ...,/... torsit.

429f. **insano ratis/premente uento rapitur**

For insanus uentus, cf., e.g., Stat. Theb. 6.300 Aeolus insanis statuat certamina uentis; Sil. 10.226f. insani quamquam contraria uenti/exarmat uis. For the image, cf. Ov. Met. 2.184f. (of Phaethon) ita fertur, ut acta/praecipiti pinus borea.

430ff. **qualis cadit/delapsa caelo stella .../. rumpit uiam**

For the image, cf. Sen. Phaedr. 738ff. [Fugit] ... ocior cursum rapiente flamma,/stella cum uentis agitata longos/porrigit ignes (Hirschberg ad loc. notes also Ov. Met. 2.321ff.).

431. **stringens**

= 'skimming over'; cf. Ov. Met. 11.733 stringebat summas ales miserabilis undas.

433. attonita cursu

Cf. Sen. Med. 675f. namque ut attonito gradu/euasit.

Seneca here continues the metaphor of the star (430-32) since cursus is regularly used of the course of a heavenly body (OLD cursus 5b, 6a).

binas

= duas. The adjective bini can be substituted for the cardinal number duo when the two things referred to are the only two in question (e.g. the two); cf.; e.g., Liv. 29.26.2 bini consules cum binis exercitibus; Manil. 1.283 in binas Arctos.

statim

Statim occurs eleven times in Senecan drama, always at the end of a verse; on this, see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 70 para. 145.

434f. **uicta .../. bella**

A clever conceit: war is the usual arena for conquest, but Seneca uses the participle uicta of the war itself, i.e. 'the war has been conquered'.

435. **in alternam necem**

= 'to cause mutual slaughter'. For this use of alternus, cf. Prop. 2.30.21 spargere et alterna communis caede Penatis; Sen. Ep. 95.31 Non pudet homines ... gaudere sanguine alterno.

435f. iamque in alternam necem/... manus

Miller translates as though manus were nominative: '... the bands, eager to join from both sides in mutual slaughter .... ' It seems better, however, to take manus as the object of miscere, the expression manus miscere (='to join battle') being a common one (cf., e.g., Prop. 2.27.8 cum Mauors dubias miscet utrimque manus; Luc. 4.772f. neque ... licuit procurrere contra/ et miscere manus). The fact that no subject is expressed is not a problem, since it is perfectly clear from the context that tenent refers to the warriors on the opposing sides. The reading of A, manum, may be an error influenced by necem (435), or a deliberate attempt to clarify the syntax. Whatever its cause, it cannot be correct, since this is a context in which the use of the singular for the plural would make no sense: the joining of battle presupposes more than one side and therefore more than one hand.

437. librata

There is MS consensus on uibrata but all modern editors follow Heinsius in emending to librata. Heinsius' stated reason for the emendation is to avoid repetition with uibrat in 339 (Aduers., 57), which is not very convincing, considering the amount of non-emphatic repetition in Senecan drama. A more compelling argument in favour of librata is that tela uibrat implies continuing aggressive movement, which is at odds with dextra suspensa. The aggressive connotation of uibrare emerges in 439, where the contrast is made between the weapons of the brothers, which are still being brandished, and those of the rest of the soldiers, which are lying idle; see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm, 125.

438. **paci fauetur**

For the impersonal passive, cf. Cic. De Or. 2.207 studiis ... eorum ceteris commodandi fauetur; Quint. Inst. 5.7.31 huic Romae ita fautum est, ut ....

For the expression, see Sen. Ep. 90.26 paci fauet et genus humanum ad concordiam uocat.

438f. **omnium ferrum latet cessatque tectum**

E reads omnium ferrum iacet/cessatque tectum, while the version of A is omnium ferrum latet/cessatque telum. As Zwierlein has observed (WüJbb. 6 (1980), 188ff.) confusion in the MS tradition of Senecan drama between iaceo, lateo and pateo is frequent; he cites Oedip. 212 as another instance of confusion between iaceo and lateo. Here, latet (E) is probably correct, since iacet (A) (= 'be idle') is not used elsewhere of weapons (see TLL 7.30. 74-8). Latet = 'is sheathed'; cf. Varr. RR. 1.48.3 uagina ut in qua latet conditum gladium. With regard to telum/tectum, either is possible in terms of metre and sense, but tectum is rhetorically more effective than telum since it contrasts forcibly with uibrat which follows immediately, and, being the lectio difficilior, it should probably be preferred to telum. There is MS consensus on cessatque, but Heinsius emended to cessatue without explanation (see Aduers., 57), in which he has been followed by modern editors of the text. Although, as Bothe points out ad loc., scribes frequently confused the particles -ue and -que, it is difficult to see one should assume this to have been the case here since 'the swords of all are sheathed and, being covered, lie idle' makes perfectly good sense.

paci fauetur ./.. in fratrum manu

The staccato effect achieved by the asyndeton in the ascending tricolon contributes to the atmosphere of suspense, as does uibrat with its implication of barely contained violence. For the illogical sequence of thought - if the brothers' swords are still being flourished, the swords of all are not inactive - cf. 239f., 288ff.

440. laniata canas mater ostendit comas

For the accusative of respect with lanio, cf. Verg. Aen. 12.605f. filia prima manu flauos Lauinia crinis/ et roseas laniata genas; Ov. Met. 4.139f. et laniata comas .../ uulnera suppleuit lacrimis. On the origin of this 'Greek' accusative, see Austin on Verg. Aen. 2.57, Fordyce on Catull. 64.64f. and K-S 1.291. Canas emphasises Jocasta's age, thereby heightening the pathos of her situation and the audience's sense of the selfishness of the brothers.

441. inrigat fletu genas

Apart from one instance in the works of an obscure writer of the third century AD (see Ser. Samm. 588), Seneca is the only classical author who uses inrigo of umores corporis outside a medical context; cf., e.g., Oedip 346 irrigat plagas cruor; Troad. 965 inrigat fletus genas; Phaedr. 381f. genae/ rore irrigantur (TLL 7.419.61ff.).

442. negare matri qui diu dubitat potest

I.e. the longer delay in replying, the more likely it is that the

brothers will not do as Jocasta asks. Seneca, having set the scene for the next act, sharpens the suspense by suggesting explicitly that Polyneices and Eteocles may reject their mother's plea (the prominent position of negare is significant; note also abnuentes in 441).

443ff. This scene, as Opelt observes ('Zu Senecas Phoenissen', 280), appears to be an innovation on the part of Seneca. Certainly, Seneca treats the encounter between Jocasta and her sons very differently from Euripides. In part, this is dictated by the different circumstances: in Sen. Phoen. the situation is considerably more urgent since it takes place on the battlefield where the two armies are about to clash, whereas in E. Ph. Eteocles is still busy planning the defense of Thebes and the brothers meet Jocasta inside the city. Hence, in E. Ph. there is still the opportunity for an ἀγών scene in which each brother states his case (469ff.), but in Sen. Phoen. the immediacy of the danger eliminates the possibility of the lengthy presentation of the respective claims of the brothers. However, it is also true that Seneca's creation of a different setting for the scene between mother and sons reflects his particular interest in the situation. Euripides' interest in the fraternal conflict focuses not on Eteocles, who is portrayed as a stereotypical tyrant, but on Polyneices and the moral and ethical problem raised by his hostile intentions towards Thebes in an effort to regain what is rightfully his, the problem of the conflict between τὰ ἴδια and τὰ κοινά. Seneca's Eteocles, like the Eteocles of Euripides, is painted in unrelieved black and is of little interest, but Seneca, unlike the Greek dramatist, is not much concerned with Polyneices and the

moral issue either. He allows Jocasta to admit that Polyneices has the better cause (384) and to say that nevertheless he should not be attacking his city (378f.), but he concentrates not on the brothers themselves, but on Jocasta's reactions to their strife. Eteocles and Polyneices are nowhere named and have little to say for themselves (see on 281ff.). They are important only insofar as their conflict provokes very different emotional responses from each of their parents: Oedipus' pereverse reaction (331ff.) is bound up with his own feelings of guilt, but Jocasta's is not (for Jocasta's attitude to her crime, see on 451ff.) - she reacts as any anxious mother might, being desperate to protect the physical and moral well-being of both her sons, irrespective of who is innocent and who is guilty.

443. **in me arma et ignes uertite, in me omnis ruat**

Seneca here appears to use elision in a way that for him is unique: to help to convey Jocasta's highly emotional state (cf. Catull. 73.6 quam modo qui me unum atque unicum amicum habuit).

For the expression in me ... uertite, cf. Liv. 1.13.3 (of the Sabine women) in nos uertite iras and see Friedrich, Senecas dramatischer Technik, 125 n.3.

That Eteocles and Polyneices are not themselves carrying firebrands is suggested by 467ff. in which no mention is made of these; thus, one should perhaps translate 'Get your men to turn ...' (cf. 540 where the faces are clearly not being wielded by Polyneices himself).

The expression arma et ignes, or variants thereof, is almost as proverbial in Latin as it is in English ('fire and the sword'); cf., e.g., Verg. Aen. 2.664 per tela, per ignis; Ov. Met. 3.698

instrumenta necis ferrumque ignesque parantur; Sen. Ep. 24.14 gladios et enses and see Otto, Sprichwörter, ignis 1). Firebrands were commonly used in Roman (as in Greek) warfare for hurling at ships and beseiged cities (see Verg. Aen. 9.72, 12.521). Occasionally, however, they were also employed (as here, it would appear) as weapons in close combat, but this was considered unusual; see Liv. 4.33.1f., where the blazing torches wielded by the enemy army cause it to be described as a noua ... acies inaudita ante id tempus inusitataque. Hence, Jocasta's demand that firebrands be directed against her may have seemed particularly gruesome to Seneca's Roman audience.

443f. **in me omnis ruat/una iuuentus**

Perhaps a deliberate echo of Oedipus' words at 335, frater in fratrem ruat, and one which serves further to point the contrast between the attitudes of Oedipus and Jocasta to the conflict of their sons.

On the elision of the monosyllable, see Zwierlein, Prolegomena, 224f.

444. **una**

A has una, E has unam, which is the reading favoured by all modern editors. Either reading is possible in terms of sense and metre and the choice is not an easy one. The attraction of unam is obvious and consists in the stress which it lays on Jocasta's isolation and vulnerability in the face of omnis ... iuuentus. The appeal of una is a little more subtle: it emphasises the coming together of the youth, whether Argive or Theban, in common cause

against the aged Jocasta; ironically, the two fiercely opposed sides are urged to come together, not against a common foe but against a defenseless old woman. The reading of A appeals, not only because of the characteristic irony which it expresses, but also because it heralds the even stronger expression of the same notion in 445, ciues atque hostes simul .... One may note also that omnis ruat una appears to be an echo of Vergil's una omnes ruere (Aen. 8.689).

444f. **ab Inachio ./.. muro**

Inachus was a mythical river-god, who is often portrayed as the first Argive king. Muro here = urbes by synecdoche; the plural, muri, is not uncommonly used thus in poetry, but the only other instances of murus used with the sense of urbs occur at Ov. Her. 1.48 murus quod fuit, esse solum and Prop. 4.1.125f. scandentisque Asis consurgit uertice murus,/ murus ab ingenio notior ille tuo.

445. **animosa ... ferox**

By hyperbaton Seneca has the two epithets describing the opposing armies framing the line.

447. **hunc petite uentrem qui dedit fratres uiro**

Zwierlein argues convincingly for the deletion of this verse (the interpolation of which he claims, following Axelson, occurred as an explanation of ex quo (450) and influenced by Sen. Oedip. 1038f.) on the grounds that it anticipates and destroys the effect of the threat contained in 450 an dico et ex quo?; also that 447 suggests

misleadingly that Jocasta is inviting her own destruction as expiation for her crime of incest (Krit. Komm., 125). One might add, further, that 447 considerably reduces the impact of haec membra passim spargite ac diuellite (448).

448. **haec membra passim spargite ac diuellite**

For diuello and spargo (the natural order is here reversed) used of dismemberment, cf. Verg. Aen. 4.600f. The fact that Jocasta challenges her sons to kill her by tearing her limb from limb is not insignificant. The best known victim of dismemberment in classical mythology and literature is Pentheus. Seneca has already made the comparison between Jocasta and Agaue (363ff.); he now prompts a further comparison: Agaue dismembered her son, Jocasta urges her sons to dismember her.

449. **ponitis ferrum ocius**

See 438f. omnium ferrum iacet/ cessatque tectum - uibrat in fratrum manu. Ocius should be taken as the comparative of the adverb ociter rather than as the neuter form of the adjective ocior, with igitur understood after ponitis: 'are you therefore [i.e. since it is I, your mother, who asks you] laying down your swords more swiftly?' Or it may be that acius should be translated as 'too swiftly' and not 'rather swiftly', i.e. that Jocasta is still urging her sons to kill her rather than pleading with them to put down their swords. In this case an dico et ex quo? (450) means 'Must I remind you who your father is (to make you stop hesitating to kill me)? This latter interpretation, however, is not very plausible because it suggests that Jocasta wants her sons to kill

her to expiate her own guilt, which is not the point of these lines (see Zwierlein on 447). On ocius, see further Hirschberg ad loc.

450. an dico et ex quo

An here introduces a second question which is an alternative to the first; so, e.g., Verg. Ecl. 8.108 credimus? an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt? (OLD an 3).

A has et equo, E has et ex quo. Avantius in the Aldine read an dico et ex quo? dexteras matri datis, which inspired Bothe to propose emending the verse to read ac (dico ut aequum est) dexteras matri datis? There is little justification for this rather weak conjecture, since the reading of E is perfectly acceptable, although characteristically cryptic. The point of recalling Oedipus would seem to be to warn the brothers against perpetuating impious deeds of violence in the family.

dico

An instance of the present indicative used with deliberative force in a question. This occurs especially in the first person singular (L-H-S 2.308) and is very common in early Latin (especially in comedy) and less so, but far from infrequent, in later poetry. Cf. Catull. 1.1. Qui dono lepidum nouum libellum?; Verg. Aen. 4.534 et passim quid ago?, 3.88 quem sequimur?; Val. Fl. 5.285 quibus addimur armis?

dexteras matri date

For the Romans, the right hand symbolized the pledge of friendship

(one was not able to extend one's right hand unless one's sword had been sheathed); see, e.g., Cic. Phil. 11.5 dexterae quae fidei testes esse solebant sunt perfidia ... uiolatae; Verg. Aen. 6.613 nec ueriti dominorum fallere dextras (OLD dext(e)ra 2). The form dextera occurs fairly frequently in the plays of Seneca metri gratia (twenty-seven times, while dextra occurs sixty-one times; Busa and Zampolli I.277).

450f. dexteras matri date./date dum piae sunt

Jocasta's plea is given emphasis by the anaphora and the alliteration. Fantham observes ('Incest and Fratricide', 65) that it contrasts strongly with Oedipus' harsh injunction at 358 date arma matri. On the restrictive force of dum, see L-H-S 2.612 and see also 526f. Hinc modo recedant arma, dum nullum nefas/ Mars saeuus audet.

451ff. error inuitos adhuc/.../inter scientes geritur

Jocasta here uses error to describe her incestuous marriage (see Dingel, Seneca und die Dichtung, 83 on the Stoic implications), whereas at 366f. she calls it scelus (by implication, since the reference is actually to Agaue, with whom she is comparing herself). This does not mean that Jocasta's perception of her own and Oedipus' guilt has altered but rather it reveals that Jocasta shares something of both Oedipus' and Antigone's understnding of scelus. Jocasta's sense of pollution, like Oedipus', causes her to view their actions, although committed in ignorance, as a scelus; hence the paradox here, whereby they are said to have been made nocentes by an error (the paradox is highlighted by the placing of

error and nocentes at the beginning and end of the clause respectively, the former immediately following the caesura in 451 and the latter immediately preceding that in 452). Antigone, on the other hand, regards the incestuous marriage as no more than an error and therefore guilt-free, since it was not a deliberate crime (see on 203ff.). However, the fact that Jocasta here claims that error inuitos adhuc/ fecit nocentes (451f.) and contrasts this state of affairs with hoc primum nefas/ inter scientes geritur (453f.) suggests that although her sense of guilt will not allow her to dismiss her own actions as being free of blame, she nevertheless perceives intellectually that deliberate wrongdoing is a more serious matter morally than unintentional wrongdoing. Cf. E. Ph., where Jocasta expresses no sense of guilt at all and where her attitude to her incestuous marriage and the offspring born of it is summed up in her words δεῖ φέρειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν (382). Cf. also Sen. Oedip., where Jocasta appears to be little troubled by guilt and, like the Jocasta of Sen. Phoen. sees fate as responsible for the crimes of herself and Oedipus (1019 Fati ista culpa est: nemo fit fato nocens), until Oedipus rejects her (1020ff.), whereupon she is overcome by a sense of her pollution (1025f. omne confusum perit,/ incesta, per te iuris humani decus) and commits suicide.

On guilt in Senecan drama, see Zwierlein, Senecas Hercules im Lichte, 35ff.

Jocasta's argumentation here recalls Ov. Met. 3.141f. (of Actaeon): at bene si quaeras, Fortunae crimen in illo,/non scelus inuenies; quod enim scelus error habebat?

453f. hoc primum nefas/inter scientes geritur

For the (implied) injunction not to add voluntary wrongdoing to unintentional, see Sen. Herc. Fur. 1300f. Ecce iam facies scelus/ uolens sciensque.

454. geritur

Geritur here = committitur; this is the earliest instance of gero used in this way with reference to crime (TLL 6.1938.24ff.). The present tense is significant: the brothers' hands may still be piae (451) in that no blood has as yet been shed, but the breaking of the bond of pietas implicit in the very planning of war between them means that a crime is being committed even before the battle has begun (see Jocasta's words to Polyneices 542f. ut recedas, magna pars sceleris tamen/ uestri peracta est).

456. donate matrem pace

All the MSS have donate matri pacem. This reading is impossible because it results in a spondee in the fourth foot. Moricca, retaining the MS reading, defends it by citing Sen. Troad. 264 uincendo didici. Troia nos tumidos facit as a second foot dactyl and 932 altum uadoso Sigeon spectans sinu as another fourth foot spondee. In the first case, however, the final syllable of uincendo should be scanned as short, and in the second, the middle syllable of Sigeon is short: both instances can be paralleled in Seneca and elsewhere (see Fantham ad loc. and my note on Phoen. 558) and both can therefore be more easily justified than the anomaly found in donate matri pacem.

Editors and commentators have produced various conjectures to

improve the text: 1) donate matrem pace (Avantius); 2) donate matri bella (Gronovius); 3) donate matri pacta (L. Müller); 4) donate matri facere (Peiper); 5) date arma matri saeua (Tachau); 6) domate Martem pace (M. Müller); 7) o nate, fratri parce (Herrmann). Of these, 5) and 7) can be eliminated immediately as being unnecessarily extreme (there is no problem with donate) and, as far as 7) is concerned, inadequate in terms of sense and context: Jocasta is addressing both brothers in these lines not just one (to whom does fratri refer anyway?) and her appeal centres on what is due to her as their mother. 3) and 4) also fail to make good sense: Müller, (De Re Metrica ..., 185), explains donate in 3) as = concedite, 'confirm ... (to)', but this is stretching the sense of donare too far; 4), which must mean 'grant it to your mother to act', is obscure. This leaves 1), 2) and 6) as serious contenders. M. Müller's conjecture, domate Martem pace, is an ingenious one, which does not demand a radical departure from the MS reading and which makes good sense in the general context of Jocasta's plea to her sons to abandon war in favour of peace. It is not, however, particularly appropriate to the immediate context (454-58), in which the decision as to whether or not to join battle is presented as a decision as to whether to allow Jocasta to live or not - hence the retention of mater in some form seems desirable. The conjecture of Gronovius (accepted as an emendation by Damsté and Zwierlein), donate matri bella, must be interpreted as meaning 'Give up war for your mother's sake'. It is a clever conjecture which fits well into the context and this use of dono has a close parallel in Petr. 138.6 Paris Helenen huic donasset et deas (cf. also Sen. Contr. 10.3.3.; Petr. 31.1; Stat. Theb. 3.59 (TLL 5.2014.26ff.), where dono occurs in a similar sense with a dative). It could be that

this unusual use of donare confused scribes and resulted in the corruption of bella to pacem. However, Avantius' donate matrem pace seems to be the simplest answer to the textual problem: it is unobjectionable as far as sense, usage and context are concerned, and the corruption to donate matri pacem is easily explicable, since donare occurs at least as frequently (in Seneca, far more so - 47:13) with a dative as with an accusative of the recipient.

457. **maius paratum est**

Here, the murder of a parent is considered a greater wrong than the slaying of a brother; cf. 269f. where Oedipus presents his incest as a more heinous crime than his parricide and see on 269 maius scelus.

media

See Hirschberg ad loc. on the use of media here.

458. **proinde bellum tollite aut belli moram**

This verse seems to be a deliberate echo of Antigone's words to Jocasta in 406: aut solue bellum, mater, aut prima excipe. The challenge which Antigone issued to Jocasta is passed on by Jocasta to her sons. Moram here can be understood either in a temporal or in a physical sense: Jocasta is a mora either because she is delaying the start of the battle (cf. Verg. Aen. 10.427f. Abantem/... interimit, pugnae nodumque moramque) or because she is a physical obstacle to it (cf. Sen. Agam. 211 where Hector is described as sola Danais ... et bello mora and see Tarrant ad

loc.).

459. **Sollicita cui nunc**

E reads cui nunc sollicita, which is metrically impossible because it gives a dactyl in the second foot; the version of A, cui sollicita nunc gives a self-contained tribrach in the second foot of which I have found no other instances in Phoen. Sollicita cui nunc is the version accepted by all modern editors. Cui = utri (see L-H-S 2.459).

459f. **alterna prece/uerba admouebo**

See Hirschberg ad loc. notes that the combination preces admouere is Ovidian. It may be observed, in addition, that admoueo derives from Roman military language (see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 127 n.248 and cf., e.g., Liv. 42.57.10 in eundem locum rex copias admouit; Tac. Ann. 2.17 admotis sagitariis; OLD admoueo 3a) and that a contrast is thereby established between the sons who arma admouent and Jocasta whose only weapons are her pleas.

460. **amplectar**

Probably future indicative rather than present subjunctive (deliberative) in view of admouebo in the preceding sentence. Amplectar here suggests perhaps not only Jocasta's natural maternal affection, but also her suppliant role; for amplector used of the clasp of a suppliant, see Plaut. Cist. 567 anus ei amplexa est genua plorans.

461. **affectu pari**

Cf. 383 affectu pari and note 384ff., where Jocasta admits to a slight bias in favour of Polyneices, in accordance with which she now turns to embrace him first.

in utramque partem

Pars is commonly used of one of two opposing sides in war, especially civil war; cf., e.g., Cic. Att. 10.1.2 [Solonis legem] qui capite sanxit si qui in seditione non alterius utrius partis fuisset; Ov. Trist. 2.43 ueniam parti superatae saepe dedisti (OLD pars 16a).

462f. **si ... ualent, /nunc alter aberit**

Although in Cicero, as in authors of didactic works, such as Quintilian and Vitruvius, a future tense in the apodosis of a conditional sentence is regularly preceded (or followed) by a future tense in the protasis, in general, the construction si + present ... future is more common; cf., e.g., Plaut. Asin. 193 si mihi dantur duo talenta ... hanc tibi noctem dabo; Sall. Cat. 58.9 si uincimus, omnia tuta erunt; Verg. Aen. 7.312 flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta mouebo (see K-S 2.392, 1.146).

463. **iam numquam**

Iam here, as always when followed by numquam, has the sense of 'from this time on', i.e. 'in the future'; cf. Plaut. Poen. 310 iam numquam audibis uerba tot tam suauia; Ter. Hec. 465 ille reuiuiscet iam numquam; Ov. Trist. 1.3.32 iamque oculis numquam templa uidenda

meis (TLL 7.100.44-6).

464. nisi sic

I.e. in a state of hostility (cf. Hirschberg ad loc.). Cf. the vague uel sic in 3.

iunge complexus

For the expression, cf. Ov. Her. 2.93f. ausus es .../ oscula per longas iungere pressa moras; Val. Fl. 4.701f. Alcides Theseusque ... pallentia iungunt/ oscula; Stat. Theb. 12.707f. nec oscula natis/ iungit.

465f. qui tot labores totque perpessus mala/... uides

For the idea, cf. Verg. Aen. 2.283ff. ut te post multa tuorum/funera, post uarios hominumque urbis labores/defessi aspicimus.

For the expression, cf. 504f. te maria tot diuersa, tot casus uagum/ egere.

467ff. Seneca did not visualize Polyneices clearly at this point. He describes him standing with his sword drawn and with his spear cupientem excuti (468), i.e. being brandished. He is also holding his shield. It would be physically impossible for a man to brandish - although he could hold - both sword and spear while retaining his grip on his shield.

While recognizing that the modern tendency to discern sexual

imagery and innuendo where it does not exist is dangerous and frequently absurd, it seems, nevertheless, that 467-70 contain so many doubles entendres as to invite recognition of the underlying obscene implications of the passage. As has been noted, Polyneices could not be holding his arms in the way described by Seneca; the picture is exaggerated, and one reason for this may be a desire on the part of Seneca to make the most of the opportunity for sexual innuendo. Accede (see Adams, Latin Sexual Vocabulary, 175f.), uagina (ibid., 20, 219), hasta (ibid., 19f.), coire (ibid., 179) and joining of breasts (ibid., 180) are all attested sexual euphemisms. To these, one may add ensis (gladius was a common term for a penis and, as Adams observes (ibid., 19), terms for weapons were in general recognized as having a potential double meaning) and solum (female genitalia were frequently referred to in terms of a field, land, a garden and the like; ibid., 83f.). In support of the idea that Seneca is here hinting at the perpetuation of incest in the family of Oedipus, one should note Oedipus' fear that he will rape Antigone (49f.) and his veiled injunction to his sons to emulate him by sexually assaulting their mother (358 and see note ad loc.). Furthermore, sexual innuendo is a feature of the declamatory genre (see ibid., 223) and the influence of declamation on Seneca's style in the tragedies is widely recognized.

467. **impium**

For impius used loosely of weapons, cf. Cic. Planc. 98 impium ferrum ignisque pestiferos; Ov. Met. 7.396 sanguine natorum perfunditur impius ensis (for impius ensis see also Ov. Met. 14.802); Sen. Agam. 78f. impia quas non/ arma fatigant. Here, impium gains a special significance if one admits the underlying

suggestion of incest.

469. **hastam solo defige**

Cf. Verg. Aen. 6.652 stant terra defixae hastae, 12.130 defigunt tellure hastas; Stat. Theb. 9.234f. uiridi defixa .../ caespite ... spicula.

471. **uinculo frontem exue**

Vinculo here refers to the helmet itself, pars pro toto; elsewhere, uinculum denotes the helmet-straps (so Ov. Met. 12.141 uincla trahit galeae; Stat. Theb. 2.634f. nec uincla coercent/ undantem fletu galeam. For uinculum used of restrictive clothing, cf. Ov. Fast. 1.410 impediunt teneros uincula nulla pedes (of shoes); Stat. Theb. 12.89f. frontisque superbae/ uincula (of a crown).

472. **tegumen capitis**

For the expression used of a helmet, see also Verg. Aen. 7.632; Ov. Met. 3.108; for its occurrence in a non-military context, cf. Ov. Met. 1.672; Sen. Cons. Helu. 12.7.9.

belligeri

The adjective occurs first in Ov. AA. 2.672 and Trist. 3.11.13. On its subsequent use, see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 18 para. 35.

473. **ora matri redde**

Jocasta wants Polyneices to 'restore' his face to her by removing the helmet which has been concealing it. Redde is a little awkward in the context, and one should perhaps consider Heinsius' conjecture (Aduers., 57), ora matri crede (credo being used in the sense of 'entrust'), which, as he points out, would tie in neatly with an timeo matris fidem (477). However, at this point Polyneices has not yet shown fear of Eteocles, so there would be no reason for Jocasta to urge him to 'entrust' his face to her; the emphasis rather is simply on her desire to see his face.

473. **quo uultus refers**

Quo here = 'why' rather than 'whither', as 474 reveals. Seneca uses refero as though it were auerto (cf. Ov. Trist. 4.3.49f. si tu ... /auertis uultus et subit ora rubor); refero is usually used of redirecting one's gaze, face or attention to something, with ad/ in + accusative (see Verg. Aen. 12.656f. in te ora Latini,/ in te oculos referunt; Ov. Fast. 4.2 ad uatem uultus rettulit illa suos and OLD refero 14), but cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 953 quo, nate, uultus huc et huc acies refers.

Quo uultus refers/... manum is one of the few pieces of stage business in the play; see further Intro., 69f.

On Seneca's interest in the description of facial expression and bodily movement, see Evans, TAPhA 81 (1950), 169ff.

474. **acieque pauida**

Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 954 acieque ... turbida.

manum

On manus as an important word-motif in Sen. Phoen., see on 51.

475. **affusa ... amplexu**

There is no parallel for the use of affundo with reference to an embrace, although the sense (= 'with my enveloping embrace') is clear.

totum corpus ... tegam

Cf. Ov. Met. 6.298f. quam toto corpore mater,/tota ueste tegens and see Hirschberg ad loc. on the topos.

476. **cruori ... uia**

For uia used of the flowing of blood, cf. Verg. Aen. 10.487 una eademque uia sanguis animusque sequuntur.

477. **quid dubius haeres**

Clearly, Polyneices has not responded to Jocasta's request that he disarm. She is to be imagined as withdrawing slightly, pausing and then, in a different tone, asking quid dubius haeres? Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 371, where Megara's lack of response to Lycus' proposal that she marry him evokes the question quid truci uultu siles?

an times matris fidem

Cf. E. Ph. 272 πέποιθα μέντοι μητρὶ κοὐ πέποιθ' ἅμα. An

introduces a second question which is a suggested answer to the first; so, e.g., Plaut. Most. 489 quis homo? an gnatus meus?; Ter. Eun. 907 quam ob rem tandem? an quia pudet? (OLD an 2). Fidem here has the sense of perfidiam; on this use of fides, see further Hirschberg ad loc.

After 477 E has 480 (fides habenda est. redde iam capulo manum), with both parts of the verse being ascribed to Jocasta. This cannot be correct: although 480 could follow 477 in terms of sense, its transposition would leave an impossible gap between 479 and 481.

478. Timeo

Polyneices picks up Jocasta's times (477) in his response (cf. 215f., 644f., 653f., 660f.). For examples of this device in the other plays, see Zwierlein, Rezitationsdramen, 170 n.9; see Seidensticker, Gesprächsverdichtung, 38ff. for an analysis of the technique.

479. ista fratrum exempla

For the generalization for rhetorical effect of the single instance of Eteocles' perfidy, cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 1284 pauidesque matres (i.e. Megara), Med. 278f. nouas/... coniuges (i.e. Creusa), 1007f. uirginum (i.e. Creusa) thalamos pete,/ relinque matres (i.e. Medea).

479f. ne matri quidem/fides habenda est

Fidem habere + dative = 'to place trust in'; cf. Cic. Att. 8.3.2.

quanta fides ei sit habenda; Catull. 30.6 cuiue habeant fidem (OLD fides 10, 12). On the prosaic ne ... quidem, see Axelson, Unpoetische Wörter, 92.

480ff. The first nineteen lines of Jocasta's speech (480-99) are highly charged, as she tries to ensure the delay of hostilities by persuading her sons to disarm: the imperatives (redde 480, astringe 481, mane 482, pone 483, audite 488, gaude 490), the short staccato sentences (see especially 487-90) the terse rhetorical questions (488, 489f., 492, 496, 496ff.) help to convey this impression. From line 500, however, when Jocasta's initial purpose has been achieved, the tone and tempo change, as she bewails the consequences of Polyneices' exile (500-25) - from the fact that she was unable to play her role at his wedding (505ff.) to the fact that she is only seeing Polyneices, even now, because he has come to Thebes in war (522-25). The mention of Polyneices' purpose in coming to Thebes leads Jocasta on to the main theme of her speech: why Polyneices should not wage war gainst his own city (525-83). Her argumentation twists and turns with the skill of a seasoned declaimer: first, she presents the moral argument, that it is a nefas for two brothers to wage war against each other and for Polyneices to be attacking his own city (526-57); then she proceeds to the pragmatic - why destroy a city and its fields which you hope to make your own? (557-65) (Seneca does not allow her to linger over this, lest, no doubt she appear to undermine her moral argument); from here she advances to the supernatural argument - the walls of Thebes were built by quasi-divine means : how could Polyneices dare to breach them without fear (565-71); finally, she resorts to the emotional angle, calling on Polyneices to picture

men like his father (572), unmarried girls (perhaps intended to recall his sisters) (575), and his mother herself (578) being roughly treated and led off into captivity.

480ff. **redde/.../armatus mane**

One must imagine Polyneices reluctantly to have removed his helmet and sheathed his sword, while darting anxious glances at Eteocles, who is still fully armed.

481. **astringe galeam**

Seneca appears to have been thinking of a Roman helmet, which was tied on by a strap passing from the neck guard under the ears and through the cheek pieces (see Warry, Warfare in the Classical World, 136). Greek helmets (apart from the pilos, which came into vogue in the late fifth century BC, particularly in the Peloponnese), seem usually not to have been tied on to the head (ibid., 44). There is a reference in Hom. Il. 3.371 to Paris' helmet strap, but as Kirk (The Iliad: A Commentary I, 319) points out ad loc., this is unique in Homer, which perhaps explains the 'slightly ponderous' verse which follows in explanation.

laeua se clipeo inserat

E reads inserat, while all the MSS belonging to A read ingerat, with the exception of δ (= PT) which reads inferat. The reading of δ would seem to be an attempt to correct ingerat, which cannot be right, since ingerere se (+ dative) means 'to fling/ thrust oneself into/ onto' (see Sen. Ep. 82.21 se infestis ingerere mucronibus) and never 'to grasp'. For the expression manus inserere (+ dative), cf. Verg. Aen. 2.671f. clipeoque sinistram/ insertabam; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 169

caeloque insereret uipereas manus; Plin. HN. 32.17 pisces ora ... manibus inserendis praebent (TLL 7.1871.8ff).

482. dum frater exarmatur

On the usage of exarmo, which occurs first in the writings of the elder Seneca, see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 77 para. 165.

483. tu pone terrum, causa qui ferri es prior

The emphatic tu marks Jocasta's turning from Polyneices to Eteocles. Seneca's oblique reference to Eteocles as causa qui ferri es prior is illustrative of his fondness for antonomasia; for further examples in the dramas, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 127f.

As Hirschberg notes ad loc., Seneca's use of prior indicates that he does not regard Polyneices as completely free of responsibility for the war.

causa qui ferri es prior

Ferrum here is used with the sense of pugna or bellum; cf. Verg. Aen. 8.648 in ferrum pro libertate ruebant; Luc. 4.215 Dum ferrum incertaque fata [sunt]. For causa used of personal agents, cf. Liv. 21.21.1 se ... non ducem solum sed etiam causam esse belli; Sen Ben. 4.7.2 ille est prima omnium causa, ex qua ceterae pendent (OLD causa 9c).

484. furere si bello placet

The word order, with furere and si inverted, gives prominence to

furere and Eteocles' un-Stoic ira. Almost all modern editors punctuate with a colon after placet; a comma, however, would seem to be sufficient; cf. 490 where the colon is appropriate.

485. indutias

Most editors print inducias, but indutias (so Zwierlein) is probably correct. The word occurs elsewhere in the Senecan corpus only at Cons. Marc. 16.5, where it appears as indutias, but the form induciae is a common corruption in MSS (TLL 7.1927.76f.).

486. ferat ut reuerso post fugam nato oscula

The hyberbaton is due to the need to have oscula at the end of the verse, so that uel prima uel supreme can have its full effect. Fugam here = exilium; cf. Plaut. Merc. 652 quo modus tibi exilio tandem eueniret, quis finis fugae; Ov. Trist. 3.14.9 est fuga dicta mihi, non est fuga dicta libellis (OLD fuga 4). For ferat ... oscula, cf. Ov. Met. 7.729 oscula ferrem.

487. uel prima uel suprema

There may be some intentional sound-play between prima and -prema. Jocasta's kisses will be the first ones (of many) if Polyneices and Eteocles are reconciled, or, failing a reconciliation, if Polyneices is victorious in the ensuing battle; if he is defeated, she will have embraced him for the last time. For the fairly rare (in Seneca) fourth foot caesura, cf., e.g., 4, 49, 64, 76.

488. ille te, tu illum times

Ille = Polyneices, te = Eteocles.

489. ego utrumque, sed pro utroque

Sed pro utroque stresses Jocasta's selflessness: despite her position of extreme danger, her fear is not for herself but for her sons. However, whereas the brothers' fear of each other is purely physical, Jocasta is concerned as much for their moral (see 450ff.), as for their physical, well-being.

For the elision of a long monosyllable in the third foot, cf. Sen. Agam. 933 et te, Oresta and see Zwierlein, Prolegomena, 216.

491f. in quo est optimum/uinci

I.e. because no happiness can come from victory in an impious war; cf. 622ff. id bellum gere/in quo pater materque pugnanti tibi/fauere possint, 638ff. quale tu hoc bellum putas,/ in quo execrandum uictor admittit nefas,/ si gaudet? Vinci, which expresses the paradox that defeat is preferable to victory (see Hirschberg ad loc. for parallels) is placed prominently at the beginning of 492 and is given additional emphasis by the coincidence of sense break and diaeresis.

In relative clauses of characteristic, the indicative is standard among early Latin authors (Plautus, Terence, Varro) and common in poetry of all periods; it is only in classical prose authors (Cicero being a notable exception) that the subjunctive is the rule (see L-H-S 2.559; K-S 2.304f.).

492. **uereris**

Seneca uses uereor only three times in his plays (see also Phoen. 495 and Phaedr. 217; Denooz, 435), whereas he uses timeo 145 times (Denooz, 409f.) and metuo (Denooz, 226) forty-two times. The preference for timeo over metuo is characteristic of Silver Latin poets (Silius Italicus being a notable exception; TLL 8.901f.70ff.), but the avoidance of uereor is not: in Statius, for example, metuo : timeo : uereor = 24 : 75 : 36, while in Lucan the ratio is 37 : 80 : 15. It is interesting to note that in the prose works Seneca does not markedly avoid using uereor although he reveals the same preference for timeo over metuo as in the dramas: metuo : timeo : uereor = 48 : 272 : 37 (Busa and Zampolli).

493. **a suis**

A suis has MS consensus, but Heinsius (Aduers., 57) proposed emending to a tuis ('a tuis sequentia postulare uidentur'). However, this is unnecessary, since the occurrence of suus for tuus is not uncommon in sententiae; cf. Sen. Ep. 123.14 Nam si descendas, pondus suum in priorem partem dare, si ascendas, retro abducere cum uitio, Lucili, consentire est (L-H-S 2.176; see also Axelson, Neue Senecastudien, 196f.). For the opposition of fallere and falli, cf. Sen. Ep. 3.3 quidam fallere docuerunt, dum timent falli.

494. **patiare potius ipse quam facias scelus**

The idea is proverbial; cf. Plato Grg. 469C εἰ δ' ἀναγκαῖον εἴη ἀδικεῖν ἢ ἀδικεῖσθαι, ἑλοίμην ἂν μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθαι ἢ ἀδικεῖν ; Cic. Tusc. 5.56 Nam cum accipere quam facere praestat iniuriam (see Otto, Sprichwörter, iniuria 2 for further

references). Hirschberg ad loc. notes, in addition, that the maxim occurs in Seneca also at Ep. 95.52 ex illius [sc. natura] constitutione miserius est nocere quam laedi.

495. ne uerere

The construction has its origins in early Latin - on Verg. Aen. 544 ne saeui, Servius comments: antique dictum est, nam nunc 'ne saeuias' dicimus. It is an archaic feature, found commonly in poetry from Catullus onward, but very seldom in prose (L-H-S 2.340; see Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 796 for additional examples).

495f. **mater insidias et hinc/et rursus illinc abiget**

Miller translates: 'thy mother will shield thee from snares on either hand', which makes little sense, if, as is logical after uerere, one takes 'thy' and 'thee' to be singular: Eteocles may fear treachery illinc (i.e. from Polyneices) but there is no reason why he should fear it hinc (i.e. from his own side). In fact, Jocasta, while addressing Eteocles, undertakes to protect both her sons - 'your (sing.) mother will ward off treachery both from this side [i.e. Eteocles side] and then again from that'. For the weakened sense of rursus, cf. Cic. Tusc. 4.65 alia ... ratione maleuolus, alia amator, alia rursus anxius ... corrigendus. There is a certain irony in the aged Jocasta's insistence that she will protect her young, strong sons from a treacherous attack.

With regard to et hinc (495), Hirschberg ad loc. observes that in only four other cases does a Senecan verse end with two monosyllables - Troad. 42 (ad hoc), Med. 125 (in hanc), Phaedr. 713 (et hic), Phoen. 234 (quid hic); in addition to these Drexler (Einführung in die

Römische Metrik, 136) notes also Troad. 56 and 475 (sat est).

496. **exoro**

Sc. uos. For exoro used eliptically, cf. Plaut. Asin. 707 numquam hercle hodie exorabis. From undertaking to protect both her sons while addressing only Eteocles, Jocasta moves to address them both (see uestro 497).

496f. **an patri/inuideo uestro**

I.e. because his blindness will not allow him to see his sons fighting. For the present indicative used instead of the deliberative subjunctive, cf. Phoen. 450 and see note ad loc.

498. **an ut uiderem propius**

= 'or to see it at closer quarters'; cf. Liv. 9.35.5 neque subire erat facile ad propiorem pugnam; 7.10.5 Hispano cingitur gladio ad propiorem habili pugnam.

hic ferrum abdidit

For the sudden change of direction in the middle of a verse, characteristic of Senecan drama and influenced by declamation, cf. Phoen. 358; Herc. Fur. 1143, 1160; Phaedr. 684, 1196; Thyest. 901, 985.

Hic must refer to Eteocles rather than to Polyneices (pace Hirschberg, who claims (15f.) that it would be out of character for Eteocles to do what his mother asks here since he is entirely unyielding in the rest

of the play; this argument is not convincing, however, for Eteocles' immoveability with regard to the kingship is on a different level to his agreeing to put away his sword for a while), since it was Eteocles who had to disarm before Polyneices would do so; 500ff. are clearly addressed to the latter and nunc suggests that a condition has been fulfilled. Just as tu (483) indicates Jocasta's turning from Polyneices to Eteocles, so te (500) marks Jocasta's turning from Eteocles to Polyneices. Moreover, Jocasta has just been addressing Eteocles and it would therefore be strange for her to refer not to him, but to Polyneices, as hic (cf. hinc (495), which clearly refers to Eteocles).

Lindskog (Studien zum Antiken Drama II. 59; see also Rozelaar, Seneca, 532f.) observes that Seneca's ambiguous use of pronouns in certain contexts, of which this is one (see also Troad. 419ff., 924), can be used as an argument to support the view that the plays were written for performance and not merely for recitation. However, although a gesture at this point would undoubtedly eliminate confusion, a declaimer could do likewise through emphasis and change of tone.

499. **reclinis hastae parma defixae incubat**

A reads recliuis hastae. et arma, E reads reclinis hastae arma, neither of which can be correct: even if one corrects recliuis to reclinis in A, the conjunction et makes no sense, while the version of E is metrically impossible. Gronovius' conjecture, reclinis hastam et arma defixa incubans, is not convincing, firstly because reclinis never takes an accusative and incubo does so only very rarely (TLL 7.1061.61f. gives only two comparable examples), and, secondly, because it throws the emphasis onto the inactivity of the man, rather than of his weapons. Leo emended to reclinis hasta est, arma defixa

incubant, which appeals because it demands very little alteration of E. However, it is debateable whether a weapon that is defixa can be said to 'lie idle'. In addition, 'lie idle', the sense demanded by the context for incubo, is not attested elsewhere (TLL 7.1061.71). Morel's conjecture (AJPh 64 (1943), 96) reclinis hastae parma defixae incubat, is ingenious. It poses no problems of syntax or usage and finds a precedent in Verg. Aen. 12.130 defigunt tellure hastas et scuta reclinant. The alterations to the MSS which it demands, moreover, although several, are not difficult: once the p of parma had dropped out, the other changes would naturally follow.

500. **ad te**

I.e. Polyneices (see on hic 498).

preces ... maternas feram

For the expression preces fero with the sense of 'offer prayers', cf. Verg. Aen. 8.60 Iunoni fer rite preces; Ov. Pont. 2.10.40 ad aequoreos uota tulisse deos. For preces maternas, cf. Sen. Contr. 6.6 materna uerba; Val. Max. 1.84 maternas preces.

nate maternas

The juxtaposition of words denoting consanguineity stresses the basis on which Jocasta is about to make her appeal - that of the filial pietas which Polyneices owes her.

501. **feram ... lacrimas**

Cf. Sen. Troad. 1168 quo meas lacrimas feram?

sed ante lacrimas

The association of tears with prayers is a commonplace, especially in the context of the law courts; cf. Cic. Sull. 19 numquam ... illius lacrimis ac precibus restituissem; Liv. 2.40.2 mulieres precibus lacrimisque defenderunt; Ov. Her. 4.175 addimus his precibus lacrimas quoque (also Cic. Flacc. 106, Cluent. 22; Verg. Aen. 4.314, 12.56; Ov. Her. 10.148; Sen. Contr. 10.1.7). Seneca adapts the commonplace to his purpose: he uses sed ante lacrimas to introduce Jocasta's lament about Polyneices' exile (for lacrimae used with the sense of 'lament', see Prop. 4.1.120 incipe tu lacrimis aequus adesse nouis). For sed ante ... introducing an additional thought, cf. Sen. Med. 576.

longo tempore

The ablative of duration of time, perhaps an extension of the ablative of time during which, occurs, although very rarely, even in early Latin (see Plaut. Mil. 212; Ter. Ad. 520); there are scattered instances of it in later authors of the Republican period (so, e.g., Caes. BG. 1.26.5; Sall. Iug. 54.1; see K-S 1.360f.), and it becomes more common during the Empire (see, e.g., Tac. Ann. 1.53; Suet. Calig. 59; see K-S 1.361, L-H-S 2.148), Instances in Seneca occur at Helu. 20.2 omnibus saeculis; QN. 6.17.3 non exiguo tempore; Clem. 1.9.11 diutius ... quam duabus horis locutum esse constat (Bourgery, Sénèque Prosateur, 326); Fantham (Sen. Troad., 95) observes, in addition, that Troad. 68f. continuis/annis and 1058f. bis quinis ... annis express duration of time rather than time 'within which'.

501f. **teneo ./.. ora**

Cf. E. Ph. 303ff. ὦ τέκνον, / χρόνῳ σὸν ὄμμα μυρίαις τ' ἐν ἡμέραις / πρόσειδον. Since Eteocles has disarmed (498-99), there is no reason for Polyneices to keep his helmet on, and one must assume that he has removed it while, or after, watching his brother set his arms aside. Teneo ora suggests that Jocasta reaches up to cup Polyneices' face in her hands; on touching the face as a gesture of affection especially towards children, see Sittl, Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer, 33-4.

502. **profugum solo**

For the plain ablative (denoting source) with profugus, cf. Liv. 34.60.2; Tac. Ann. 16.1, Hist. 3.56; Flor. Epit. 2.7 (3.19.7) (OLD profugus 1a, 2a).

502ff. **te (502) ... te (504) ... non te (505)**

An ascending tricolon: the greatest source of Jocasta's sorrow is the fact that Polyneices married a foreign bride under adverse circumstances and that she was not present at the wedding.

502f. **profugum solo/patrio penates regis externi tegunt**

Walter (Interpretationen zum Römischen, 38f.) observes that in Senecan drama the penates are often mentioned in conjunction with patria (as at Phoen. 502, 553, 663) or (as here) some variant thereof and suggests: 'Das mag seinen Grund in der Existenz der penates populi Romani haben, deren Kult eine auf die römische Staatsebene transponierte Analogieform des privaten Haus- und Herdkultes

darstellte.'

For a comparison between Euripides' and Seneca's treatment of Polyneices' exile, see Doblhofer, Exil und Emigration, 163-66.

503. externi

Here, as at Verg. Aen. 6.94, the adjective seems to have a hostile overtone.

504. te maria tot diuersa, tot casus uagum

A reads tot diuersa, E reads tot tam diuersa, tam being an obvious gloss. Commentators and editors have been tempted to emend the verse, more because they find its sense unsatisfactory than because of MS difficulties. The problem lies in maria tot diuersa. As Heinsius (Aduers., 57) puts it: Argos inter et Thebas errarat Polynices, quomodo ergo tot maribus actus? He suggested Te maria quam diuersa, quot ..., which does not help matters much, or Tene arua tot diuersa; Bothe proposed Te amara tot diuersa (amara as in Hor. Od. 2.16.26); Bentley favoured te fata tot diuersa, and Herrmann offered tot uaria, tot diuersa, tot .... Of these possibilities, the conjecture of Bothe seems the most plausible (te amara contracting through elisiion to tamara, which became temara and thence te maria), but whether the verse requires emendation at all is doubtful. Certainly, maria tot diuersa is hyperbolic - indeed, Polyneices need not have travelled by sea at all to get from Thebes to Argos (cf. Stat. Theb. 1.324ff., however, where Polyneices reaches Argos via the Isthmus of Corinth) - but the notion that the sea-voyages of reluctant or unhappy or fate-driven travellers must be both long and difficult is a topos, based, surely, on Odysseus' troubled wanderings (cf. Verg. Aen.

1.31ff. multosque per annos/ errabant acti fatis maria omnia circum; Ov. Trist. 1.5.61f. nos freta sideribus totis distantia mensos/ sors tulit ...) and should not be taken too literally. Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 125) notes that maria tot diuersa ... egere could be based on Verg. Aen. 1.376 diuersa per aequora uectos.

505. **non te duxit in thalamos parens**

Seneca here uses parens, instead of the more emotive mater, maybe metri gratia.

Seneca here adapts the traditional deductio of the bride by her mother to her new husband's house to suit his purpose; Hirschberg ad loc. compares Ov. Her. 8.96 where Hermione says intraui thalamos matre parante nouos.

Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 126) invites a comparison between in thalamos ... primos and Stat. Theb. 2.255f. primosque solebant/ excusare toros. In the latter expression, primos ... toros clearly means 'first marriage-bed', a euphemism for the first act of sexual intercourse, since the context is one in which young girls, about to be married, are performing a last religious rite to the virgin goddess Pallas. Here, however, it would not be particularly appropriate to ascribe the sense of 'first' to primos, since an insistence that this is Polyneices' first marriage (the implication is that further marriages are expected) or his first act of sexual intercourse (hardly significant, or probably, even accurate, in the case of a male) would be rather strained in the context. Rather, in thalamos primos = 'the threshold of the bedroom'; cf., e.g., Cic. Fam. 3.6.2 te in prima prouincia uelle esse, ut quam primum decederes; Verg. Aen. 1.541 bella cient primaque uetant consistere terra; Ov. Her. 4.8 ter in primo destitit ore sonus (OLD primus 10b). See further Hirschberg ad loc.

506. comitata

= comitans; on the present sense of perfect participles of deponent verbs, see L-H-S 2.391.

506f. nec sua festas manu/ornauit aedes

The festas aedes is probably the bridegroom's home, following a logical train of thought from thalamos primos, rather than the bride's, where the wedding feast would have been held. There is no ancient evidence of a tradition whereby the bride's mother herself adorned the bridegroom's house: Seneca is creating an imaginary scenario in order to stress the extent to which Jocasta has been left out of Polyneices' life. It is striking that this vignette of normal (but imagined) marriage comes from Jocasta, whose own marriage to Oedipus was so bizarre; see further on 623f.

507. sacra ... uitta

Leo's emendation of sua, found in all the MSS, to sacra, has won widespread acceptance among modern editors (but cf. Giardina). Sua is clearly an error of reduplication, caused by nec sua in 506, since there is no external evidence to support the notion that the bridegroom's mother used her own headband to bind together the nuptial torches. Vitta sacra was a technical term for the woollen band, which had a recognized use in a variety of religious rituals, including marriage ceremonies (Daremberg and Saglio V. 950ff.); see further Hirschberg ad loc.

508f. **dona non auro graues/gazas socer**

E reads dona non auro graues galeas socer, A has dona non auro et graues gazas socer. Even if one emends the auro of A to auri (so Gronovius), the resultant reading is unsatisfactory, since graues gazas is weak. In support of auro graues (E), Bothe cites Verg. Aen. 1.728f. hic regina grauem gemmis auroque poposcit/ ... pateram. But gazas of A is preferable to galeas of E - galeas is too specific and seems somewhat incongruous in the context.

dona ./.. non urbes dedit

The dowry system is attested as early as Homer (Il. 9.147, 289, 22.50; Od. 7.314); Craik ('Marriage in Ancient Greece', 11) observes that bride-price is mentioned also and that the two systems seem to have co-existed and operated throughout the classical Roman period (for details see Crook, Law and Life of Rome, 104f.). Whether Seneca was thinking, at this point, of Polyneices in Greek or in Roman terms, he would, as the son of a king and co-ruler of Thebes, ordinarily have been able to expect a handsome dowry; as a penniless exile, however, he was in no position to make demands (see also Phoen. 372f.).

510. **dotale bellum est**

Cf. Manil. 914f. restabant Actia bella/ dotali commissa acie; for similar sarcasm in Senecan drama, see Med. 489 hac dote nupsi and Costa ad loc. The implication is that Adrastus promised military support to Polyneices if the latter would marry his daughter. Seneca does not explain why Adrastus wanted Polyneices as a son-in-law; in E. Ph. we are told that Adrastus regarded the marriage of his daughters to Polyneices and Tydeus, another exile, as the fulfillment of an

oracular command by Apollo (408ff.) (so also Stat. Theb. 1.395ff.).

510ff. **hostium es factus gener/ .../sine crimine exul**

The asyndeta suggest Jocasta's highly tense and emotional state. The climax is reached with the paradox sine crimine exul. Cf. Phoen. 340ff.

511. **patria remotus**

Polyneices lives remote from Thebes both literally, in terms of distance, and figuratively, because of his marriage to a foreign bride. For the figurative use of remotus, cf., e.g., Cic. Off. 1.63 scientia, quae est remota ab iustitia; Lucr. 5.125 quid sit uitali motu sensuque remotum (OLD remotus 3a).

hospes alieni laris

Laris here, considering that the context is one in which Polyneices' relationship to his fatherland is the issue, would appear to be a reference to the Lar as the tutelary deity of the State (see OLD Lar 1c), rather than of the home. On the Lares in Senecan drama, see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 36f. and see commentary on 344. The fact that Polyneices does not belong in Argos is stressed by the juxtaposition of hospes and alieni; cf. Phoen. 587 gentis hospes externae.

512. **externa consecutus, expulsus tuis**

The chiasmus allows emphasis to fall on expulsus (the sound-play

between -utus and -ulsus is effective) as the first word after the caesura. Externa consecutus is vague enough to encompass both the notion of an alien bride and that of foreign military aid.

512f. expulsus tuis,/sine crimine exul

Jocasta's bias towards Polyneices, which she admits in 384f., is very apparent here (see also 483 causa qui ferri es prior).

From quid in ne quid e fatis tibi/ desset paternis (513f.), it is clear that when Jocasta designates Polyneices as 'an exile who has committed no crime', she is thinking at the same time of Oedipus, who, likewise became an exile (although his banishment was self-imposed) without, to her mind, being guilty of a crime (see 452f. omne Fortunae fuit/ peccantis in nos crimen).

514. desset

Strictly speaking, desset should be desit, present subjunctive in a final clause, depending on habes, present indicative, in the main clause. Possibly Seneca was influenced to use the imperfect subjunctive by the perfect infinitive in the noun clause, errasse thalamis, or perhaps desset depends on a constructio ad sensum since the main clause is equivalent to errauisti thalamis.

515. errasse thalamis

The comparison between Polyneices' marriage and that of Oedipus is not a very good one: the error of marriage to a foreign bride, whose father has provided no dowry, is not really comparable to that of a man who has unwittingly committed incest by marrying his mother. The

point is, however, that in Jocasta's view they both went disastrously wrong in marriage and the comparison conveys the strength of her reaction against Polyneices' marriage: she dislikes it so much that she can actually rank it with the incestuous marriage of Oedipus.

515f. nate post multos mihi/remisse soles

E omits this clause entirely. There seems, however, to be no reason to suppose this to be an interpolation by A; its omission by E is probably the result of a scribal error, caused by the fact that nate appears again in the following verse in exactly the same position in the line, viz. immediately following the third-foot caesura. For emphatic repetition of this kind, cf. Phoen. 309f. where sola appears in the same position in two consecutive lines, 318f. iubente te, 455f. si, 522f. nempe, 527f. nefas. Soles = dies; Seneca presumably uses the poetic word here to give the phrase a more impressive ring since post multos ... dies would sound rather weak in the context. Sol can, of course, refer to the passing of seasons or of a year (OLD sol 3), but used thus it does not occur (as here) without an explanatory phrase or epithet.

516. suspensae

E reads suspensae, A sollicite. Sollicite = sollicitae (cf. insane = insanae in 420) (on -ae and -e in E and A, see Tarrant, Sen. Agam., 363); a vocative would result in a tribrach in the fifth foot. In favour of suspensae is the fact that it is the lectio difficilior and reading sollicitae would result in an unharmonious jingle with soles.

516f. metus/et spes

This is explained in the verses which follow: Jocasta has longed to see Polyneices, but his presence brings with it the fear of war. On metus and spes applied to a person, see Hirschberg ad loc., who observes that although spes is commonly used thus, metus occurs in this context for the first time in Seneca.

518. semper rogaui

The use of the perfect here, rather than the imperfect, relegates Jocasta's prayers to a fact of the past; their long duration is not stressed since their object has been achieved.

518ff. cum tuus reditus mihi/.../quantum daturus

A somewhat laboured expression of the idea that Jocasta has as much to lose by Polyneices' return as she has to gain. Aduentu tuo ('by your coming') is redundant.

520. quando

The final o is short; so also Sen. Thyest. 59 (ecquando), 82; Phaedr. 673; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1531, 1769, 1771 (in Med. 870, Thyest. 82, Troad. 298, Herc. Oet. 1766 it is long). On shortened final o in Senecan drama as a dating criterion, see Fitch, AJPh 102 (1981), 303ff.

pro te

Jocasta is telling Polyneices what she asked; hence the pro illo/ eo

of her original question becomes pro te when she is relating it to Polyneices.

521f. **dixit inridens deus:/'ipsum timebis'**

For a deity who mocks the plight of a mortal, cf. Ov. Met. 4.523ff. where Juno laughs in scorn at the frenzied Ino when she calls on Bacchus for help (for mocking Fortune, see Liv. 30.30.5, Juv. 3.40). The god's response is clearly unsollicited by Jocasta, since her question in 520f. is addressed, rhetorically, to Polyneices (see pro te 520).

For irrideo/inrideo used elliptically, cf., e.g., Plaut. Most. 1132 uerbero, etiam irrides?; Cic. Verr. 4.148 qui illic eius modi est ut ... omnes cum loqui coepit irrideant (OLD irrideo 1d).

522. **ipsum timebis**

I.e. 'You will cease to be afraid for him when you begin to be afraid of him'.

522f. **foret/... fores**

In Senecan drama essem occurs six times, forem eight (Denooz). Seneca, unlike Propertius and Ovid, does not use forem as a word of future meaning; it seems to occur metri gratia for essem, since in seven out of the eight instances of its occurrence (Phoen. 271, 522, 523, Thyest. 512, Phaedr. 196, 1243, Agam. 184) it is found at the end of a verse where an iambus is required, and in the eighth (Oedip. 297) it occurs in the fourth foot where a spondee would not be permitted (on forem and essem, see Lowrance, TAPhA 62 (1931), 169-91).

522ff. **nempe nisi/.../bello carerem**

Jocasta's dilemma - she can either have Polyneices and war or neither war nor Polyneices (Jakobi, Der Einfluss Ovids, 44 compares Ov. Met. 8.44-6) - is neatly summed up in these two well-balanced clauses. Nempe and carerem frame each clause, appearing in the same position in the line in each case, foret is balanced by fores, ego te and bello, the significant words in the respective clauses, are each placed prominently at the beginning of a line. On the use of nempe, see Hirschberg ad loc.

524f. **triste conspectus datur/pretium tui durumque**

The hyperbaton results in the placing of the placing of the two emotive adjectives, triste and durum, in emphatic positions at the beginning and at the end of the clause.

For the possessive adjective, tui, with conspectus (= 'of seeing you'), cf. Plaut. Trin. 278 me aps tuo conspectu occultabo; Ter. Heaut. 434 tuom conspectum fugitat.

525ff. **sed matri placet/ .../Mars saeuus audet**

The transition from sed matri placet to hinc modo recedant arma etc. is somewhat awkward: with sed matri placet, Jocasta implies that it is worth having to endure war to see Polyneices, yet her urgent plea for Polyneices to withdraw his troops, in the very next line, undermines the effect of this display of maternal love. This sudden change of heart in Jocasta suggests her state of inner turmoil. The presence of modo (= 'only'), common in commands or requests (cf., e.g., Cic. Fam. 16.11.1 modo fac ... ne quid aliud cures; Verg. Aen. 7.263ff. ipse modo Aeneas/.../adueniat; OLD modo 1b), increases, rather than reduces

the awkwardness, since it stresses the contradiction.

526. **recedant**

The line will not scan with the reading of A, redeant.

arma

I.e. armati; so also Sen. Oedip. 731f. feta tellus/... effudit arma, Troad. 182f. Threicia ... arma ../. strauit (for arma used thus by other authors, see TLL 2.600.44ff.).

dum

On the restrictive use of dum (= 'while still'), see on 450f.

527f. **hoc quoque est magnum nefas,/tam prope fuisse**

For the structure of the sentence, cf. 514f. hoc quoque ex illis habes,/errasse thalamis, where, however, quoque has the sense of 'also', rather than, as here, 'even'.

528. **tam prope fuisse**

Sc. ea, referring back to arma.

et exanguis tremo

Paleness is a conventional accompaniment to fear; see, e.g., Sen. Herc. Fur. 414 Gelidus per artus uadit exanguis tremor; Stat. Theb.

3.361 trepidi exsanguesque metu; Apul. Met. 9.27 exangui pallore trepidantem puerum (TLL 5.1825.73ff.). On the ὀροειδεία which characterizes Seneca's descriptions of unpleasant emotions, see Canter, Rhetorical Elements, 176f.

529. **cum stare fratres hinc et hinc uideo duos**

The separation of fratres and its accompanying adjective, duos, by hinc et hinc, is an instance of word order aiding sense: the distance between fratres and duos reinforces the notion of the brothers' being on opposite sides.

Cum here could be either explicatory (= quod), explaining why Jocasta is stunned and shaking (528) cf., e.g., Plaut. Most. 1128 saluos quom aduenis ... gaudeo; Lucil. 1015 gaudes, cum differs; Apul. Apol. 13 habeo gratiam, cum ... audis, and see K-S 2.328ff., 346f.; L-H-S 2.624f. on cum explicatory and cum causal), or it could be determinative, i.e. '... I tremble when I see ....' (cf., e.g., Cic. Diu. 2.3 sex libros de re publica tunc scripsimus, cum gubernacula rei publicae tenebamus, and see L-H-S 2.622).

For hinc et hinc, see Sen. Herc. Fur. 1211, Thyest. 591, 735, 1013, [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 947, 1018, 1135 (cf. hinc atque hinc Sen. Phoen. 393, Med. 343); in other authors, see Hor. Epod. 2.31; Petr. 79.8 v.3; Sil. 12.483; Stat. Silu. 4.3.47 (TLL 6.2804.55ff.).

530. **sceleris sub ictu**

Ictus is used figuratively here in an unusual way: it refers not to a misfortune which has already occurred or is in the process of occurring (so Cic. Agr. 2.8 sublata erat ... fides non ictu aliquo nouae calamitatis; Ov. Pont. 2.7.41 Fortunae uulneror ictu; Sen. QN.

2.59.2 ut effugiamus ictus rerum), but to one which is about to take place, i.e. ictu here = periculo. The image is of Crime, which brings culpability, poised to strike; hence, one might translate the phrase as 'under the threat of guilt'. The only true parallel to this use of ictus is found at Luc. 5.729f. quod nolles stare sub ictu /Fortunae, quo mundus erat Romanaque fata. Cf. Sen. Thyest. 645, where the expression sub ictu suggests a state of subjection rather than one of imminent disaster (see Tarrant ad loc.).

membra quassantur metu

Cf. Sen. Phaedr. 1034 os quassat tremor; Troad. 623 Reliquit animus membra, quatiuntur, labant. As the frequentative form of quatio, quasso is more forceful than quatio, suggesting continuous or repeated shaking or trembling.

531f. **quam paene mater maius aspexi nefas,/... potuit pater**

Cf. 535 quod paene uidi and Hor. Od. 2.13.21f. quam paene ../. uidimus (see Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc.).

Maius ... nefas quam quod recalls Oedipus' desire at 353f. for maisque quam quod ../. aliquid. Here, as at 272f., the fraternal conflict is regarded as a greater evil than incest, which is presumably what is referred to in quam quod miser uidere non potuit pater (Seneca could hardly have Oedipus' parricide in mind here, for, since Laius is dead, Oedipus would not have had to look at him subsequently). There is no suggestion in other treatments of the legend that Oedipus blinded himself to avoid having to see Jocasta again; the conceit appears to be uniquely Senecan and characteristic of the striving for emotional effect of declamation.

Potuit here = 'could bear'; for this sense of possum, found also at 579, see OLD possum 3.

533ff. **licet timore facinioris tanti uacem/.../quod paene uidi**

In 531 Jocasta's shaking limbs are accounted for by the fact that the battle has almost become a reality and may still do so; in 533ff. she says that even if she may now be free from anxiety about the battle (since, by implication, it is no longer likely to take place), nevertheless she is unhappy quod paene uidi, i.e. because of the situation which produced the possibility of the impious war.

535ff. **per decem mensum graues/.../genas parentis**

The three elements of the tricolon, on which Jocasta bases her appeal, have been cleverly chosen and arranged. On the surface, Jocasta is simply urging Polyneices to think of what his war-mongering will mean to his family - to herself, to Antigone and to Oedipus. However, the association of Jocasta's pregnancy with Antigone's devotion and Oedipus' self-mutilation is also a reminder of the tainted relationships within the house of Thebes, against the backdrop of which the warring of the brothers must be set.

535. **decem mensum**

Bömer (on Ov. Fast. 1.33) observes that although ancient opinion was divided as to whether birth occurred in the tenth month or after ten months, the figure ten was usually associated with the gestation period (he cites as exceptions Ov. Pont. 11.45f., Met. 2.453, 10.295f., 10.479; Cic. ND. 2.69, where birth is said to occur within

the ninth month or after it; to these one might add also Tert. Carn. Christ. 41.6 and Amm. 14.11.22). He comments, further, that it is not clear why pregnancy should be associated by both Greeks and Romans with a period of ten months (since, observably, it did not normally last that long), but suggests, plausibly, that it may refer to ten lunar months (i.e. forty weeks) which would include ten menstrual periods, since gestation is not uncommonly referred to in terms of the moon or, less frequently, of missed menstrual periods; see TLL 4.969.56ff. See also Pease on Cic. ND. 2.69, who cites other views - that the Romans counted the months inclusively so that ten month pregnancies were in fact simply full-term nine month gestations; that ten ancient lunar months are equal to ten solar ones - and gives extensive references to nine and ten month pregnancies

535f. **per decem mensum graues/uteri labores**

For the genitive of quality, mensum, cf. Ov. Met. 8.500 bis mensum quinque labores. Uteri is a subjective genitive. Labor(es), in the context of childbearing, usually refers, like its English derivative, to the suffering involved in the actual process of giving birth (see TLL 7.792.46ff.); here, however, Seneca applies it to the suffering involved in the entire gestation period. Cf. the example from Ovid cited above, where, similarly, labores refers to the whole pregnancy.

536f. **perque pietatem inclitae/precor sororis**

The reading of A, perque pietate inclitas ... sorores, appears to be the work of an interpolator who was unhappy about Seneca's failure to include Ismene in his play. It does not seem likely that Seneca himself, having ignored Ismene's existence thus far, would at this

point have introduced her for no good reason, and it would have been absurd for him to have presented her, hitherto unmentioned, as a sister 'famous for her 'pietas'. The version of E, as Zwierlein points out (Krit. Komm., 126), aptly recalls Antigone's devotion to her father, which is well attested in the first part of the play; see esp. 80ff., 310. On the question of Ismene, see further on 551.

537f. per irati sibi/genas parentis

Jocasta assumes, ironically, that Oedipus shares her love for Thebes and for her sons (see also 552ff., 623). The fact that the audience knows better than his wife what Oedipus' true feelings are, creates an awareness of the great gulf that has grown between Oedipus and Jocasta.

538. genas

Genae in the sense of oculi is found only among the poets, and is especially favoured by Statius (see TLL 6.2.63ff.). Other instances of its use in this sense in Senecan drama occur at Herc. Fur. 531, 767, Phaedr. 364, Troad. 441, 1138, Agam. 726.

538f. scelere quas nullo nocens./... exigens

Again the opposition of scelus and error (see on 203ff., 451ff.1), the two concepts being given prominence by their respective positions - scelere at the beginning of the clause and erroris starting a verse. By expressing Oedipus' lack of a crime in negative terms, scelere ... nullo nocens, Seneca manages, by using the word nocens, to suggest Oedipus' paradoxical sense of guilt despite his blamelessness in legal

terms; cf. 218 et dira fugio scelera quae feci innocens, and see note ad loc..

540. hausit

The impact of hausit is increased by its separation from quas by parenthesis, [scelere] ... nullo nocens ... exigens, and by its position as the first word in the verse and the last in the clause. Seneca possibly had in mind Ovid's description of Hecuba's blinding of Polymestor in Met. 13.564, where Hecuba, having gouged out her victim's eyeballs, is said to have dragged out his actual eye-sockets, loca luminis haurit. This is the only other instance of haurio used with reference to the eyes.

nefandas

Nefandas here = 'impious', rather than simply 'wicked' or 'dreadful' (as in Verg. Aen. 2.155f. uos arae ensesque nefandi,/ quos fugi): an assault on Thebes by a stranger might be 'wicked', but Polyneices' attack on Thebes is more than this - it is an offence against the divinely sanctioned bonds of pietas, both the pietas owed to the family and that due to one's city (see Liv. 1.59.10 inuecta corpori patris nefando uehiculo filia, where, likewise, nefandus has a strong religious sense).

541. **bellici**

= bellicosi; so Prop. 3.14.13f. Amazonidum ... bellica ./.. turba; Sen. Phaedr. 550 bellicus Mauors, but cf. Sen. Agam. 547 non me fugauit bellici terror dei, where bellici is used correctly to

designate Mars as the god of war.

retro

Retro gives added weight to flecte (which on its own can mean 'turn back'; so, e.g., Hor. Od. 2.19.17 tu [i.e. Bacchus] flectis amnis; Ov. Her. 10.35f. reuertere, Theseu, flecte ratem; OLD flecto 3a), by implying a complete turn of 180 degrees.

542. **ut**

Concessive, = 'even if' (see K-S 2.251; L-H-S 2.647).

542f. **magna pars sceleris tamen/uestri peracta est**

Cf. 527f. hoc quoque est magnum nefas,/ tam prope fuisse, Sen. Troad. 594f. magna pars sceleris mei/ olim peracta est. Damsté's conjecture (Mnemosyne 47 (1919), 76), uasti for uestri, on the grounds that the plural is unjustified since Polyneices alone is being addressed, is unnecessary. Vester is not generally used in Senecan drama simply as a substitute, metri gratia, for the singular, tuus (unlike noster and meus); the only instance of its being used thus may be at Troad. 701 (where, however, Penelope, Laertes and the Greeks could be included). It is found however, as a 'plural of respect', when a god or individual worthy of honour is referred to or addressed at [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1808 (perhaps also 956, 1513), and, as is the case here, when there is an implication of plurality - although Jocasta is specifically addressing Polyneices and it is his guilt to which she is referring, the scelus is not restricted to him alone, since Eteocles shares the responsibility (cf. 496f., where Jocasta is addressing only

Polyneices when she refers to Oedipus, but Oedipus being the father of both brothers, she calls him patri ... uestro; Troad. 532f., where Ulysses, addressing Andromache, refers to Astyanax as natus ... uester, uester being used rather than tuus because the boy is the child of both Andromache and Hector).

543. **hostili grege**

= 'by a hostile mob'. Grex, like cateruae in 58 (see note ad loc.) is contemptuous, being a term which a Roman would only use to describe an enemy army but never his own disciplined forces (cf. exercitus 550). It is not used elsewhere in this sense in Senecan drama, but cf. Cic. Dom. 24 cum grege praedonum impurissimo; Hor. Epod. 16.37 pars indocili melior grege.

544. **fulgentes procul**

Procul must be taken closely with fulgentes - 'gleaming from afar': the enemy troops are close at hand, but their shining weapons were sighted from far away as they approached. Hirschberg ad loc. compares Verg. Aen. 8.592f. and 6.826f.

545. **armis**

Ablative of respect; cf. Hor. Od. 1.7.19f. fulgentia signis/ castra.

cateruas

See note on 58.

545f. **equitatu leui/Cadmea frangi prata**

Cf. 396 equestri fracta ... tellus pede and see note ad loc. Prata is more specific than tellus and suggests the nature of the damage caused by Polyneices' forces (this is more fully described in 560f.): the grazing lands have been trampled by the horsemen.

546. **rotis**

= curru, pars pro toto; so Ov. AA. 2.230 si rota defuerint, tu pede carpe uiam; Mart. 10.104.5ff. illinc te rota tollet et citatus/altam Bilbilin/... /uidebis.

546f. **excelsos rotis/uolitare proceres**

Cf. Manil. 1.362f. Heniochus .../quem ...curru uolitantem ... alto. Just as the language which Seneca uses to describe the forces coming against Thebes is the sort of language a Roman would use of an army of Rome's enemies but not a Roman army (see on 543 and 58), so also the fact that the leaders are said to ride about in chariots indicates that Seneca is not thinking of Polyneices' army in Roman terms. Rather he appears to be envisaging it as a Homeric army (chariots were last used in Greek warfare in Homeric times) or, possibly, as a contemporary barbarian force since the Britons, one of Rome's most persistent enemies used chariots as late as the third century AD (Warry, Warfare in the Classical World, 164).

546. **igne flagrantes trabes**

Trabes here = faces, cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 103 where, however, trabs seems to indicate something larger (see Fitch ad loc.).

For the pleonasm, cf. Sen. Cons. Marc. 19.4 nec flumina igne

flagrantia; Ep. 115.4 oculis uiuido igne flagrantibus.

548. cineri

For the rare dative after peto ('seek for'), see Verg. Georg. 2.505 hic petit excidiis urbem miserosque penatis; Sil. 2.29 Hannibalem poenae petit impia tellus; in/ad + acc. is the usual construction (see OLD peto 12).

quae petunt

Heinsius (Aduers., 58) proposed emending petunt, the reading found in all the MSS, to petant (cf. 149, where he preferred ferant to ferunt). It is not necessary, however, to see the relative clause quae ... domos as expressing characteristic, and since there is consensus on petunt it seems unnecessary to emend.

549. **facinus quod nouum et Thebis fuit**

Hirschberg ad loc. observes that there is, in fact, a legendary precedent for the battle between the brothers which is to be found in the fighting among the Cadmeans sprung from the dragon's teeth, referred to in Sen. Oedip. 750 as proelia fratrum.

549f. **fratresque .../in se ruentes**

The catalogue of horrors to which Thebes has been a witness rises in a crescendo from the fields filled with enemy troops (543f.), through the farmlands which are being ruined by Polyneices' cavalry (545f.) and the firebrands which threaten the very homes of the Thebans (547f.), to the final abomination: two brothers attacking each other

(549f.).

The phrase fratresque in se ruentes is given sufficient prominence for one to suppose that Seneca intended his audience to recall Oedipus' wild wish, frater in fratrem ruat (355); this recollection prompts, again, a comparison of the attitudes of Oedipus and Jocasta to the fraternal conflict.

550. **exercitus**

The army is that of Eteocles which is defending Thebes. It is noteworthy that this force is accorded the status of an exercitus, where Polyneices' troops are unflatteringly designated as a hostilis grex (543 and see note ad loc.). This reflects the dilemma in which Jocasta finds herself: her sympathies lie with Polyneices as an individual, but she is hostile to his troops who are attacking her city.

551. **hoc populus omnis**

The reading of A is et populus omnis. Hoc of E is preferable because of the resultant triad, hoc (550) ... hoc (551) ... hoc (551), which adds force to the ascending tricolon.

uestraque hoc uidit soror

E reads utramque hoc uidit soror, which is impossible both metrically and because the feminine singular accusative makes no sense. A has et utraque etc., which is metrically impossible. Peiper's emendation, utraque, has won universal acceptance despite the obvious problem

which it raises: that this is the sole reference in the play to Ismene (a similar reference to her by A in 536f. being generally dismissed; see note ad loc.), who otherwise, as far as Seneca is concerned, does not exist. This is not an insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of utraque (which is supported by totus (550) ... omnis (551)), since it is not more than an untidy detail in a play that bristles with loose ends, but it seems at least possible, even likely, that both the version of E and that of A result from a misreading of an unclear word in the archetype and that the word was not utraque but uestraque - an easy error, especially considering that uestra is regularly abbreviated in MSS to ura (cf. the confusion in the MSS between uris and uestris in 560 and see note on 542f.).

552. **genetrixque**

The chiasmus in uestraque hoc uidit soror/ genetrixque uidi causes stress to fall on genetrix, a key-word, not only in the general context of Jocasta's maternal concern, but in the immediate context, since it prompts an explanation of why Oedipus, the father, cannot be included in the list of witnesses.

uidi

Although there is MS consensus on uidit, Iac. Gronovius emended to uidi, an emendation which has been accepted by most modern scholars. Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 126) points out that although Jocasta could have referred to herself in the third person (he cites Sen. Troad. 686, Phaedr. 1256, 1264, Thyest. 1040 as parallels), the influence of the preceding elements in the catalogue, totus hoc exercitus,/ hoc populus omnis, uestraque hoc uidit soror (550f.), all of which are in

the third person may have resulted in the corruption of uidi to uidit. Certainly, uidi is rhetorically more effective.

nam

Nam is explanatory and introduces Jocasta's reason for omitting Oedipus from her catalogue (= [I do not mention Oedipus] for ...). It is not used thus elsewhere in Senecan drama, but cf. Sall. Iug. 102.11 ... numquam populum Romanum beneficiis uictum esse. Nam bello quid ualeat, tute scis (where nam = [I do not speak of Roman achievements in the military sphere] for ...) and Val. Fl. 4.692f. parsque ... deprensa iugis; nam cetera caelo/ debita (where nam = [only part of the ship was crushed by the crags] for ...) (OLD nam 5).

debet sibi

This seems a strange way to refer to Oedipus' self-inflicted blindness (Birt, Rh. Mus. 34 (1879), 524 suggests that the reference may be also to Oedipus' voluntary exile; however, the concentration of words to do with sight - uidit (551), uidi (552), spectauit (553) - makes this unlikely). Perhaps Seneca deliberately and ironically uses debeo to recall the language of debt and repayment which expresses Oedipus' libido moriendi in the first part of the play.

553. quod

For a quod clause after debeo, cf., e.g., Sen. Contr. 2.4.4 tibi debeo ... quod habuit filius ..., in qua domo aegrotaret; Quint. Decl. 318. 5 (ed. Winterbottom) deberi mihi ... quod ille ... uictus est; Plin. Ep. 3.9.46 mihi ... debere se praedicant, quod ... turbinem

euaserint (TLL 5.93.27ff.); OLD debeo 5).

553f. **occurrat tibi/... Oedipus**

= 'Let Oedipus present himself to you [sc. in your imagination']; cf. Sen. Suas. 6.4 Occurrat tibi Cato tuus cuius a te laudata mors est.

554. **Oedipus**

Because Seneca is so sparing in his use of proper names of dramatis personae, especially in Phoen. (see on nata 2) the proper name of a character, when it does appear, has considerable impact. Oedipus' name is, in fact, the only one used in the play (see also 89, 178, 313) and this is the sole instance of its being used by another character; elsewhere it is used only by Oedipus himself. The effect of saying (nunc) Oedipus rather than, say, pater tuus, is to play down Oedipus' paternal, authoritative role, which commands respect (and to which Jocasta appeals in 537f.) and to hold him up more as a man whose exacting moral standards should have a sobering effect on an impulsive young man about to plunge into nefas.

quo iudice

= 'in whose judgement'; for the expression, cf. Hor. Sat. 2.1.83f. bona [carmina] si quis/iudice condiderit laudatus Caesare; Ov. Met. 2.428f. salue numen, me iudice .../audiat ipse licet, maius Iove (OLD iudex 4b).

erroris

Erroris should be taken with poenae rather than with iudice: i.e. not 'in whose judgement of his error punishment even is sought', but 'in whose judgement punishment, even for error is sought'.

555. ne ... erue

For ne + imperative, see note on 495.

erue

Seneca may be engaging in some subtle use of language here. Jocasta has just mentioned Oedipus, who punished himself even for an error, the punishment being, of course, self-blinding. In the first part of Phoen., Oedipus is dissatisfied with his punishment and twice uses eruo in the context of his dissatisfaction: in 179f. he says minus eruisti lumina audacter tua,/quam praestitisti, and in 227ff., lamenting the fact that he can still hear, he says [utinam] ... omne qua uoces meant/ aditusque uerbis tramite angusto patet/ eruere possem. Both passages conjure up such gruesome images that they are not easy to forget. From speaking of Oedipus, then, with whom the idea of 'gouging out' is strongly connected, Jocasta passes on to plead with Polyneices, using, in her entreaty, the very verb (eruo) which is so closely associated with Oedipus. The self-blinding of Oedipus and the threatened overthrow of Thebes are thus intertwined - two links in the chain of inevitable self-destruction by which the royal house of Thebes is bound.

556. **patriam et penates**

See also 503 (solo) patrio penates, 663 patriam, penates and see note on 502f.

quas regere expetis

There is no problem with the quas of the MSS but Zwierlein (OCT) reads quae, for which the only explanation would appear to be that it is a typographical error (although it reappears in the 1987 reprint). Viansino tentatively, and unnecessarily, suggests qua.

557. **quis ... furor**

Quis, the interrogative pronoun, is regularly used as an adjective (instead of qui) with masculine nouns in the nominative singular; cf. Verg. Aen. 10.9f. quis metus ../. hos arma sequi ... suasit?; Sen. Herc. Fur. 1138 Quis hic locus, quae regio ...?; Stat. Theb. 9.70 quis tuus hic, quis ab hoste cruor? (K-S 1.655.)

quis tenet mentem furor

Just as Oedipus is characterized as the very antithesis of the Stoic sage by his libido moriendi (see on 77ff.) and his ira (see on 163), so the furor of his sons (see also 289f. natos ... grauiter furentes, 352 iuuenum furor; cf. 411 feruidos iuuenes) brands them also as incapable of reason and lacking control over their lives because of their surrender to passion.

558. **petendo patriam perdis?**

For the present tense used with future sense, see Ter. Ad. 757 ego hos conueniam, post huc redeo; Verg. Aen. 10.438 mox illos sua fata manent; Sen. Herc. Fur. 306 sequimur (see Fitch ad loc.) (K-S 1.119). The alliteration is emphatic and the contraposition of petendo and perdis suggests that Seneca intended some play on the two senses of the former, 'seeking' (as opposed to perdis) and 'attacking', which is the meaning demanded by the context.

Hirschberg ad loc. notes that the shortened -o of the ablative of the gerund is found also at Sen. Oedip. 942, Troad. 264; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1862.

For the idea that it would be madness to destroy the city one hopes to rule, cf. E. Ph. 560ff.

559. **uis esse nullam**

For this use of nullus (= 'non-existent', 'destroyed'), cf. Sen. Cons. Marc. 19.5.10f. nec potest miser esse qui nullus est, Ep. 99.30 Utrum putas illi male esse, quod nullus est, an quod est adhuc aliquis? (also Cons. Polyb. 9.3, Ep. 92.34, 102.4). In all these cases nullus is used of a person or people; for nullus used of the state, see Cic. Att. 14.13.6 redeo ... ad miseram seu nullam potius rem publicam.

causae nocet

For the expression, see Cic. De Or. 2.303, 330; Quint. Inst. 5.7.17.

560. **ipsum hoc quod**

Ipsum hoc must be taken as the subject of nocet, rather than as an

internal accusative (cf. Verg. Aen. 6.694 metui ne quid Libyae tibi regna nocerent), with quod (= 'in that') introducing an explanatory clause.

562. **segetes adultas sternis**

The reading of E, adultas, is far better than adustas of A: if the crops had already been burnt, it would hardly matter if they were subsequently flattened (sternis). Adultas, however, implies that they were ripe and ready for harvesting when they were destroyed, which makes the loss far greater than if the crops were newly sown or only half grown. For the expression segetes adultas, cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 699 nec adulta leni fluctuat Zephyro seges.

561f. **fugam/edis**

This expression is not found elsewhere in Latin literature and is somewhat strained, although the sense is clear: 'you inflict flight' i.e. 'you cause people to flee'. The closest parallel would seem to be Verg. Aen. 10.602f. talia ... edebat funera ductor/Dardanius, where, however, the use of edo is less awkward. Fugam edis is an example of the combination of concrete (edis) and abstract (fugam) terms which Tarrant (Sen. Thyest., 26) identifies as a feature of Seneca's poetic style.

562ff. **nemo sic uastat sua .../aliena credis**

The sense of the sententia is: if you contemplate destroying Thebes and its territory, you cannot really believe that your claim to them is justified, since no man would destroy what he thinks is his own.

corripi igne

= 'to be set on fire'. For the expression, see, e.g., Ov. Fast. 2.524 ignes corripuere casas; Plin. HN. 2.148 maiore igne nubibus correptis (OLD corripio 1d).

563. **quae meti gladio**

= 'to be mown down with the sword'. The metaphor is from reaping and is not uncommon in poetry (TLL 8.890.35ff.); see esp. Verg. Aen. 10.513 proxima quaeque metit gladio, of which Seneca's phrase seems to be an echo.

564. **aliena**

I.e. Eteocles'.

rex sit ex uobis uter

By hyperbaton, Seneca places the most significant word, rex, at the beginning of the clause, where it gains additional weight from being the first word after the sense-break and caesura; the second most important word, uter, is given prominence by its position at the end of the verse (cf. 110 sed uterque). It is noteworthy that Jocasta says sit and not futurus sit: the brothers are not fighting about which of them is to be the king, but about which of them is presently the legitimate king in terms of their agreement.

565. **manente regno**

This continues the line of argument begun by Jocasta in 558.

petes

All modern editors, with the exception of Zwierlein, read petis with E rather than petes, the version of A. Petes, however, is almost undoubtedly correct: it is the verb in the first of a series of rhetorical questions and the verbs of the following five questions (up to trahet 574) are all in the future (the present subjunctive, eat in 576 and uehar in 578, makes the transition from future to present indicative, and the following four questions (up to in iras pectus 583) have their verbs in the present). The corruption of petes to petis is easily explained by assimilation to telis and flammisque, which enclose it.

565f. **haec telis petes/flammisque tecta**

See 547f. igne flagrantes trabes/... cineri quae petunt nostras domos. The prominence given to haec reflects Jocasta's horrified incredulity at Polyneices' intention to wage war against his own city.

Amphionis

See on 19ff. Amphion and Zethus were, according to Homer, joint alternative founders of Thebes to Cadmus (see Hom. Od. 11.262ff. Ἀμφίονά τε Ζῆθόν τε,/οἳ πρῶτοι Θήβης ἕδος ἔκτισαν ἑπταπύλοιο,/ πύργωσάν τ',...; Farnell, Hero Cults, 212ff.) although Fitch (on Sen. Herc. Fur. 262f.) notes that in Roman poetry Zethus tends to be passed over. As Segal ('Dissonant Sympathy', 230f.) observes, Amphion, like Orpheus, is a 'civilizing hero' and lines 566-71 contrast his creativity through song with Polyneices' warlike urge, which threatens the destruction of Thebes. Seneca, in Phoen., suggests Segal, evokes the two sides of Thebes' past: Amphion stands for civilizing order,

whereas Zethus, Actaeon, Pentheus and Ino represent violent death and bloodshed; he compares Sen. Oedip. 609ff. It is noteworthy that Seneca devotes more attention to the legendary figures of destruction (13-25) than he does to the gentle Amphion (cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 915ff. where no mention at all is made of Amphion), and that when he introduces Amphion it is as a counterweight to the present violence in the house of Thebes: the man of peace and beauty has no place in the polluted world of Phoen. and the brief mention of him serves only to highlight the dark corruption of this world.

567. **moles**

Moles, which implies a structure on a grand scale, makes the achievement of Amphion seem more impressive than, say, murum would; furthermore, it, together with quassare (= 'to batter' but not 'to destroy'; on the force of quassare, see on 530), suggests that the puny human resources at Polyneices' disposal would be of little avail against such an immense and almost magical fortification.

568ff. **stridente tardum machina ducens onus/ ... /in turres lapis**

The noisy, laboured work of the crane stands in contrast with the musical ease of Amphion's achievement.

On ancient cranes of various kinds, see Vitr. 10.1.1-2, 10.2.1-11; Landels, Engineering in the Ancient World, chap. 4. Pease on Verg. Aen. 4.89 where, as here, the existence of cranes in the heroic age is assumed, notes that references to cranes occur also at Cic. Verr. 2.145, 2.147; Hor. Sat. 2.2.73; Suet. Calig. 57; Stat. Silu. 1.1.63f., where, as here, the noise made by the machina is referred to (strepit .../ machina).

568. **tardum ... onus**

Seneca seems to have made a mental leap from the wall as a whole to the stones of which it was comprised: quas still refers to moles, but when he speaks of moving the tardum onus with a crane, the onus of which he is thinking cannot be the entire wall but the individual lapides, to which he refers explicitly in 570. The expression tardum ... onus may have been influenced by Hor. Sat. 2.3.101f. tardius irent/ propter onus.

570. **summas uenit in turres lapis**

The hyperbaton causes emphasis to fall on lapis (see below) and summas, thus highlighting the magnitude of Amphion's achievement.

lapis

By using the singular, lapis, reinforced by ipse, rather than lapides, Seneca manages to convey the idea of the wall building itself gradually, stone by stone, as Amphion played and sang. Both lapis and saxum (see saxa 571) can refer to a stone shaped specifically for building purposes (OLD lapis 4a, saxum 3a), (although presumably the stones used by Amphion had not had to be shaped beforehand).

in

In here = 'as far as'; so, e.g., Hor. Od. 3.3.45f. [Roma]...nomen in ultimas/extendat oras; Stat. Silu. 1.5.51f. amnis/... in fundum summo patet (Phillimore, OCT) (OLD in 13; TLL 7.739.5ff.).

571f. haec saxa franges uictor? hinc spolia auferes?/uinctosque duces

All modern editors, with the exception of Zwierlein, punctuate as follows: haec saxa franges? uictor hinc spolia auferes? uinctosque duces etc. (Zwierlein has no punctuation mark after auferes). Worth considering, however, is Gronovius' punctuation haec saxa franges uictor? hinc spolia auferes? with hinc in the second question balancing hanc in the first. The picture conveyed by haec saxa franges would thus not be of Polyneices breaking down the walls to gain access to the city, but of his destruction of them once Thebes has been captured. This would correspond well to the idea of Polyneices' taking away spoils and leading the inhabitants captive - both of which could only occur after victory had been achieved. Vinctosque, the reading of E and T (one member of the family of A MSS), is universally preferred by modern editors to uictosque found in β and P, also members of A. In terms of sense, uinctosque is undoubtedly superior - uictosque, in view of uictor (571), would be superfluous and rather weak - and the corruption to uictosque probably occurred under the influence of uictor.

duces patris aequales tui

Aequales probably here = ' of the same age', rather than 'of the same status', since Oedipus no longer has any status in Thebes. The victims of war enumerated by Jocasta - the old and the weak (the women) - are clearly chosen to prick Polyneices' conscience. The reference to Oedipus increases the impact of her words, since, by analogy, Polyneices is prompted to think of his father being led away in chains. (On the question of Oedipus' age, see on senex 32).

573. **matresque**

= matronasque. Matres is not infrequently used in battle descriptions in poetry (so Verg. Aen. 2.489, 11.146,877,891; Luc 7.370; Sil. 2.251, 12.599; Stat Theb. 2.480, 7.240), not only for metrical reasons, but because it is more poignant than matronae: a matrona implies a husband, but a mater has children also. Here, matresque is especially pointed; Jocasta has already invited Polyneices to identify with his father the leaders whom he will take captive; by immediately using matres in the same context, she encourages Polyneices to identify the captured women with her, his own mother.

ab ipso coniugum raptas sinu

Cf. Sen. Troad. 798 talis e nostro sinu/ te rapiet hostis; Agam. 187 nec rapere puduit e sinu auulsam uiri (and see Tarrant's note ad loc.). The word order of this phrase is effective: grammatically, ipso qualifies sinu, but by its position it gives emphasis also to coniugum, thus stressing both the pathos of the situation in which wives are torn from their husbands' arms, and the helplessness of the men to protect their womenfolk.

574. **miles**

The collective singular here emphasises the group rather then the individual: 'die Vielheit von Individuen wird als Einheit betrachtet' (L-H-S 2. 13); so Ov. AA. 1.97 cultissima femina, where women crowding to the games are compared to a swarm of bees, the significance being the size of the throng rather than the nature of the individual women of which it is composed. Miles (which occurs as a collective singular also at 627 and 636), it is suggested in L-H-S 2.13, is one of several

collective singulars (cf. arator, auditor, hostis, testis) which originated in the everyday language of the Romans (see further Löfstedt, Syntactica , I.16f.). The subsequent frequency of its use, both in poetry and in prose and in a variety of contexts (see TLL 8.945.18ff.) suggests, however, that its colloquial flavour was obscured as it became absorbed into the literary language. Seneca, in fact, never uses the plural milites in any form in his tragedies.

adulta uirgo

Here, the singular appears to be used instead of the plural in order to focus on an individual from the crowd implied by the situation (cf. miles 574 where the singular is collective and lays emphasis on the army as a unit rather than as individual soldiers); Löfstedt (Syntactica, I.18) says much the same thing about the use of the singular leonem in Sall. Iug. 6.1 leonem atque alias feras primus aut in primis ferire.

576. **nuribus ... Argolicis**

Nurus here probably = 'young married woman'; see Ov. Met. 3.529 mixtae ... uiris matresque nurusque, where the distinction is made between the young and the older married women. To imagine the Theban girl as being given as a slave to nurus, who would be about her own age, rather than to older women, to whom, simply by virtue of their years, she would owe respect, is to add refinement to her humiliation.

eat

The present subjunctives (deliberative) here and in uehar (578)

provide a transition from the contemplation of the future in which Jocasta has been indulging, to the solid reality of the present, to which she returns at the close of her speech, ending strongly with the imperatives pone (584) and refer (585).

577. **an et ipsa**

An here does not, as most frequently in Senecan drama, introduce a question which is an alternative to the one which precedes it (cf. 107, 450), but rather it heralds a question containing a more shocking suggestion, i.e. it conveys the idea 'Is it possible that even I ...' An is used thus also in Sen. Herc. Fur. 1043, Troad. 890, 973, Phoen. 498, Agam. 195, Thyest. 745; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1954.

palmas uincta postergum datas

Lit. = 'bound behind her back with respect to her surrendered hands.' Datas is somewhat ponderous: it is used occasionally elsewhere in poetry of a prisoner offering his hands to be bound (so Sen. Troad. 152f. non adsuetas ad sceptra manus/post terga dabit), but never, as here, in the passive and attributively.

On postergum/post tergum, see Zwierlein (OCT), 462.

578. **mater ... praeda**

For praeda used of human beings in the context of military conquest, see also Sen. Troad. 58, 150, 980; [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 1789. The effect is to dehumanize, by designating people as no more than a movable object of some value. For praeda used of people in other contexts, see Sen. Phoen. 15 and OLD praeda 2b.

triumphi ... fraterni

For triumphus with a possessive adjective or objective genitive in the sense 'triumph over', see OLD triumphus 2b.

For the genitive of origin with praeda, see Cic. Att. 11.6.2 omnium uestrum bona praedam esse illius uictoriae; Sall. Iug. 14.11 fratre meo ... interfecto ... regnum eius sceleris sui praedam fecit.

On the Roman colouring, see Walter, Interpretationen zum Römischen, 81-9; Hirschberg ad loc; Fitch on Sen. Herc. Fur. 58f.

579. **potesne**

Potes is repeated in 580 and again in 581 in an ascending tricolon, the rising tone of which mirrors the advance on, and capture of, Thebes by the enemy forces: first, the defending Thebans are killed, then the enemy moves against the city itself and, finally, the city is sacked and burnt. On the sense of potes here, see on 531f.

ciues

The use of ciues here is noteworthy: Jocasta is reminding Polyneices that those whom he will watch being killed are not strangers or people with whom he has no connection, but his own fellow-citizens (see also 635).

leto et exitio

Cf. the English formula 'death and destruction'. Lucr. 4.766 mortis letique provides the only close parallel in Latin.

580. **passim**

Passim here suggests the abundance of dead bodies (= 'all over the place'), rather than that they are randomly scattered; see Liv. 22.2.7 inter iumenta et ipsa iacentia passim morientes.

caris

Dear to whom? Obviously to Jocasta herself, but that hardly needs to be stated. Perhaps one should see her as trying to rekindle Polyneices' affection for, and sense of loyalty to, Thebes.

581. **hostem**

On the collective singular, see on miles 574.

sanguine et flamma

This is the only instance of the doublet 'blood and fire' in Latin literature (although in Sen. Const. Sap. 6.2 one finds flammas et sanguinem stragemque); the common combination, in Latin as in English, is 'fire and the sword', flamma et ferrum (see TLL 6.866.5ff. and cf. Phoen. 565f. haec telis petes/ flammisque tecta). Seneca's avoidance of the proverbial expression, however, creates its own impact, and sanguine is a powerful substitute for ferro, being especially evocative with the verb implere (582).

581f. **sanguine et flamma potes/implere Thebas?**

Jakobi (Der Einfluss Ovids, 45) compares Achilles' words in Ov. Met. 12.110 Eetioneasque inpleui sanguine Thebas.

582. **tam ferus durum geris**

What Zwierlein describes as the 'preziöse Sperrung' of E, appears in A as tam ferum et durum. This seems to be the work of the notorious interpolator of A, since the reading of E is not only rhetorically more effective but it is also very Senecan; for an adjective qualifying, or noun in apposition to, the subject expressed in the verb, see 6 (solus), 32f. (senex, infans), 49 (miser), 220 (nefandus incestificus exsecrabilis), 230 (infelix pater), 289 (pater), 291 (unus), 379 (parens), 459 (mater), 460 (misera), 477 (dubius), 571 (uictor), 586 (profugus).

582f. **durum ./.. pectus**

Cf. 165 animam duram, 309f. affectus ... duros.

583. **saeuumque in iras**

In iras depends on saeuum. Hirschberg ad loc. compares Tac. Ann. 1.6. in ... necem durauit and Amm. 17.8.1 sed ad insaniam post Argentoratum audaces omnes et saeuos. See also OLD in 16a for comparable expressions expressing tendency of activity.

et nondum imperas

For the turn of phrase, cf. Sen. Agam. 904 nondum recedunt, where, as here, the expression both concludes a description of horrifying activity and introduces a further observation on the situation.

584. **quid sceptra facient**

See also Sen. Ira 2.5.5 Quid hic rex fecisset? for the notion that a bad tendency in a man's character will become worse the more power he wields.

584f. **pone uaesanos .../animi tumores**

Cf. Sen. Thyest. 519f. ponatur omnis ira et ex animo tumor/ erasus abeat.

585. **teque pietati refer**

The dative of place whither after compound verbs is common in verse (see, e.g., Verg. Aen. 5.34,93,346,434,805) and probably reflects the usage of earlier Latin. It was Vergil, in particular, who extended this usage to uncompounded verbs (see, e.g., Verg. Aen. 5.451 it clamor caelo and see Williams' note ad loc.) perhaps under the influence also of the early and common use of the dative with expressions denoting delivering over to death (leto dare etc.). For a discussion of this construction, see Löfstedt, Syntactica, I. 180ff., Marouzeau, Traité de Stylistique latine, 208ff.

586. **ut profugus errem semper**

Cf. 643f. Sceleris et fraudis suae/ poenas nefandus frater ut nullus ferat? Polyneices' indignation in both instances is revealed by his swift expostulation. On ut -indignatiuum, see Hirschberg ad loc. Spontaneous, natural transitions like these from one speaker to the next are rare outside the dialogue passages: the long speeches tend not to be closely linked one to the next. Seneca could have written

ut semper errem profugus, but he wished the emphasis to fall on semper rather than on profugus: we know that Polyneices is an exile; the issue is whether he is always to remain one.

587. **opemque ... sequar**

Sequor here = 'seek' (as, e.g., in Sen. Clem. 2.4.2 Haec crudelitas quidem, sed quia nec ultionem sequitur; see OLD sequor 16a) rather than 'attain' (as in Sen. QN. 2.1.5 haec quaestio cedet superioribus et ... meliorem condicionem sequetur; see OLD sequor 17): it is the humiliating insecurity and the dependent nature of his position that Polyneices is trying to express. The basic meaning of sequor, 'follow', hovers near the surface, suggesting the great reversal in Polyneices' fortunes: he, who was once a royal leader, is reduced to the status of a humble follower (see 597, where this is explicitly stated).

588. **quid paterer aliud, si fefellissem fidem**

Polyneices is responding implicitly to Jocasta's declaration in 494 that it is better to suffer, than to commit, a wrong. He questions whether there is anything worse that could happen to him than what he is already enduring. Jocasta was speaking from the standpoint of one who recognizes an objective moral code, which does not evaluate actions in terms of potential gain or loss (see Sen. Ben. 1.1.12 Hoc et magni animi et boni proprium est, non fructum beneficiorum sequi, sed ipsa ...); Polyneices, in turn, rejects that code and replaces it with one based on expediency (as does Eteocles, more obviously in 664).

On the Roman legal colouring of this and the following verse, see

Walter, Interpretationem zum Römischen, 56.

589. **si peierassem**

I.e. as Eteocles did: Polyneices moves from seeing his brother as having broken his promise to seeing him as never having meant what he promised in the first place.

fraudis

Fraudis may be intended to pick up the idea, implicit in peirassem, of deliberate deception from the very time of the making of the agreement. This notion does not occur elsewhere in Phoen., nor is it found in E. Ph., where it is implied that Eteocles, having acquired a taste for power during his year of legitimate rule, refused to relinquish the throne (74f.).

590. **at ille praemium scelerum feret**

Fero here = 'acquire' (so Caes. BC. 1.86.1 ut ... ultro praemium missionis ferrent; Hor. Sat. 2.1.11f. multa laborum /praemia laturus). The expression praemium sceleris (uel sim.) is elsewhere used ironically of punishment (see Verg. Aen. 2.537; Ov. Met. 8.503); here, however, it is used quite literally (cf. Cic. S. Rosc. 117 tribus praediis, hoc est praemiis sceleris, ornatus; Juv. 8.119 quanta ... feres tam dirae praemia culpae).

591. **matris imperio**

Imperio refers here to the authority of the head of the household, to which Jocasta has succeeded since Oedipus' withdrawal from Thebes and

from his family. There may be also a secondary and ironical sense of 'military authority', since Jocasta, unarmed and singlehanded, has succeeded in stopping the battle.

591f. **iubes abire? matris imperio obsequor -/ da quo reuertar**

The paradox is very Senecan: Polyneices says that he will go away in obedience to his mother's wishes if she will give him something to return to - in other words, he will abandon his hostile intentions and his pursuit of the throne, if she can offer him some alternative dwelling in Thebes. That reuertar implies a return to Thebes is suggested by the comparison between Eteocles' palace and the humble cottage which Polyneices envisages for himself. For the sudden (albeit, in this case, shortlived) change of heart, cf. Oedipus' capitulation in 300ff. and see ad loc. This is a clever device employed here by Seneca to quicken his audience's interest, since they know that, in terms of the legend, Polyneices cannot relinquish his claim to the throne.

592ff. **regia frater meus/habitet superba**

This is a problematic clause: E reads meus and habitat, whereas A has mea and habitet. Meus is preferable to mea because it balances me in the following clause better ('my brother' ... 'me') and because the important issue here is not Polyneices' right to the kingdom of Thebes (as mea would suggest), but the contrast in situation between his brother and himself. The corruption of meus to mea would have been an easy one, with the proximity of regia and superba (see below). Habitet of A is superior to E's habitat: Polyneices, further to the statement of his condition for the withdrawal of his army, says:

'Alright, let Eteocles live in a great palace, only let a small cottage shelter me.' Müller's argument (Philologus 60 (1901), 264f. in support of habitat hinges on punctuation, which he supplies as follows:

habitat superba : parua me abscondat casa?
hanc date repulso : liceat exiguo lare
pensare regnum?

He maintains that if one takes parua ... casa and liceat ... regnum as statements, as Leo does, and now Zwierlein, the opening words of Jocasta's response, si regna quaeris ... (599f.), make little sense, since Polyneices has said that he will be content with a small cottage. However, Jocasta's opening words clearly pick up de regno in 598, not parua casa (593). What seems to be happening here and in the following lines is that Polyneices yields briefly to Jocasta, asking only to be able to live modestly in Thebes; however, he then thinks of his humiliating marital situation as a poor man married to a rich wife and dependent upon his father-in-law, and he wavers, saying: in seruitutem cadere de regno graue est (598).

593. casa

Casa here, as in Lucr. 6.1254f. penitusque casa contrusa iacebant/corpora paupertate et morbo dedita morti suggests poverty (i.e. 'hut', 'shanty') in contrast to the wealth of regia superba, rather than merely a simple lifestyle (i.e. 'cottage') in the manner of the early Romans (so Tib. 2.5.26).

abscondat

Abscondat conveys both the idea that the hut will shelter Polyneices

and that it will hide him so that he will exist in obscurity; see Sen. Herc. Fur. 197 where tegat, likewise, has this dual sense.

594. da

A reads da, E reads dare, which makes no sense and which Leo emended to date. Date, however, does not improve matters much, for to whom does it refer? Only Jocasta is being addressed, and although Eteocles must be thought of as being present, Polyneices nowhere else addresses him directly. In 592 da is undisputed; it seems sensible, therefore, to read da in 594 likewise and to dismiss dare altogether as resulting from reduplication with the re- of repulso.

594f. liceat exiguo lare/pensare regnum

For the contrast, cf. Plin. Pan. 47.6 ... ut ad paruos penates et larem angustum ex domo principis modestiae et tranquillitatis exempla referantur; Stat. Theb. 2.438f. anne feret luxu consueta/ ... hunc regina larem pauperem. Isid. Orig. 20.2.24 observes: antiqui domos lares dicebant. Given the traditionally simple way of life of the Romani prisci, this may explain why, even in the literature of the first and second centuries AD, lar tends to be used of humble rather than grand dwellings (see TLL 7.966.42ff. and esp. Prop. 4.1.128 in tenuis cogeris ipse lares; Hor. Od. 3.29.14f. paruo sub lare pauperem/ cenae; Stat. Silu. 3.1.82f. tenuis casa .../magnum Alciden humili lare parua premebat; Sil. 7.172f. paruosque lares humilisque subire/ limina ... tecti.).

coniugi donum datus

Since Polyneices lacks home, property and position, he is without status in his father-in-law's household, and, like a gift, he can be set aside and treated with contempt. The use of donum in the context of marriage recalls Jocasta's lament in 508ff. that Polyneices received no dowry from his father-in-law except military aid. Here Polyneices goes further: not only did he not receive a dowry, but he himself was made over to his wife as a gift.

596. **arbitria ... dura**

Arbitria here = 'domination' (cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 433 Imperia dura) rather than 'whim' or 'caprice' (as in Cic. Verr. 5.34 iura omnia praetoris urbani nutu atque arbitrio Chelidonis meretriculae gubernari) as is indicated by dura. Cf. E. Ph. 425, where, in response to Jocasta's enquiry as to whether Polyneices is happy with his bride or not, Polyneices replies: οὐ μεμπτὸς ἥμῖν ὁ γάμος εἰς τόδ' ἡμέρας.

thalami ... felicis

Thalami here = coniugis, an extension of the metonomy whereby thalamus is used with the sense of 'marriage' or 'marital relations'; it is thus used also in Sen. Phaedr. 1216 ut concremarem prolis ac thalami rogos (OLD thalamus 2b). The epithet felicis must here mean 'fortunate' in the material sense, i.e. 'wealthy' (as in Sen. Med. 217f. generosa, felix, decore regali potens/ fulsi): Polyneices' bride rules him because she is a rich princess and he is a penniless exile. For the thought, see Plaut. Aul. 167ff. istas magnas factiones, animos, dotes dapsiles,/clamores imperia, eburata uehicla, pallas,

purpuram,/nil moror quae in seruitutem sumptibus redigunt uiros; Sen. Contr. 1.6.5 Omnes uxores diuites seruitutem exigunt (also Jerome Ep. 127.3). Cf. Sen. Troad. 873f. [deus] ... coepit teque felici parat/ dotare thalamo, where felici ... thalamo most naturally means 'with a happy marriage', although it could mean 'with a rich husband', since Helen goes on to stress the extent of Pyrrhus' kingdom (cui regna campi lata Thessalici patent 877).

596f. **dura felicis feram/ ... lixa dominantem sequar**

The synchesis favoured by Seneca in these two lines permits the juxtaposition of contrasting words for rhetorical effect.

597. **humulis ... lixa**

This is the first instance of lixa (lit. = 'camp follower') used metaphorically and hyperbolically in poetry (on its literal use, see Billerbeck, Senecas Tragödien, 68 para. 136) to suggest a lowly and degrading position (see TLL 7.1550.61ff. for subsequent instances of this use of lixa). Its use here is particularly appropriate in view of Polyneices' military dependence on Adrastus.

598. **in seruitutem cadere de regno graue est**

For the sententia, see Sen. Contr. 1.6.5 et tunc est tormentum carere diuitiis cum illas iam senseris.

On concluding sententiae of this kind, see note on Phoen. 197f. Polyneices appears, with this utterance, to be regretting already his conditional submission to his mother's will. See further on 643f.

599ff. In this speech Jocasta lists the places where Polyneices may be able to find a kingdom for himself (599-616a). She concludes by urging Polyneices not to think of Thebes as a possible kingdom and to imagine that it is still in his father's control (616b-17a). This leads her to reiterate the impious horror of the war Polyneices has been about to undertake and to claim that exile is preferable to such a war, whereas, she claims, a war without the danger of impiety would be quite acceptable, even pleasing (617b-25a). She undermines the latter statement somewhat in the following lines in which she discourses about the uncertainties and dangers of war in general (632a), only to return finally to the subject of the war against Eteocles with praemium incertum petis,/ certum scelus (632b-33a). The final verses are devoted to renewed efforts to convince Polyneices to withdraw from the conflict with Eteocles (633-43a).

599f. nec potest sceptro manus/uacare saeuo

Heinsius (Aduers., 58), unhappy with the epithet saeuo, suggested that laeua or auito or even, somewhat obscurely (he compares Sen. Phaedr. 490 non ille regno seruit), seruo be read instead. However, saeuo on which there is MS consensus is unexceptionable in terms of sense within the context of the play: it is the issue of kingship which has brought the brothers into armed conflict and in 582ff. Jocasta says to Polyneices: tam ferus durum geris/ saeuumque in iras pectus? et nondum imperas./ quid sceptra facient? The combination occurs also at Sen. Herc. Fur. 272 ac saeua iusta sceptra confregit manu.

600. multa quae possint peti

Most modern editors, Zwierlein being a notable exception, read possunt

(with C K Q e), but the MS support for possint is stronger (E P S), and, since this is a context in which a subjunctive of characteristic would be appropriate (as in 5f., 622ff.), there seems to be no good reason to favour the indicative, which may have resulted either from a simple misreading of -i for -u, or as a result of the indicative potest in the preceding verse.

602ff. On catalogues in Senecan drama see on 124ff. In this instance, the list of places where Polyneices may seek a kingdom is far from being a random one (cf. the catalogue at 124ff.): despite Jocasta's declaration that any land in the whole world will offer a kingdom for Polyneices to conquer (600f.), the areas listed by her fall into a carefully circumscribed area - western Asia Minor (see on Hermus 607), which is near enough and wealthy enough to be enticing, though far enough from Thebes to be safe, in Jocasta's view. It may also have suggested itself to Seneca because of the Trojan War (see on 621f.). The order in which the places are mentioned does not seem to have any significance.

602. **nota Baccho Tmolus**

The reading of A, tota, gives vastly inferior sense: Tmolus (a mountain in Lydia) is described as well known to Bacchus (for the dative, cf. 608 grata Cereri Gargara) because it was famous for the wine which was produced on its slopes (see Verg. Georg. 2.97f.; Plin. HN. 5.30) and because it was a holy mountain (Aesch. Pers. 49; Strab. 13.626) on which the Lydian bacchants practised their rituals (see E. Ba. 64f.). Perhaps the first explanation is the one which dominates here, since it would be the rich vineyards of Tmolus which would be

likely to attract Polyneices, rather than its religious significance. On the orthography of Tmolus, see Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 127).

603. iacent

Zwierlein (WüJbb. 6 (1980), 189), noting that there is confusion elsewhere in the MS tradition of Senecan drama between iacere and patere (also latere; see on 438) - he cites Troad. 121, 878 and Thyest. 649f. - here emends iacent of the MSS to patent, on the grounds that 'Der Begriff lata spatia erfordert das Verb patere'. In support of this, he cites various instances where patere is used with spatium and/or latus (viz. Verg. Ecl. 3.105; Sen. Ben. 1.3.9, 4.6.1, Ep. 102.23, Herc. Fur. 1109). These, however, are not conclusive - and Zwierlein's emendation does not appear in his 1986 OCT text - since elsewhere, albeit not as commonly, these words are used in conjunction with iacere; see Sen. QN. 1 praef. 13 Quantum est enim quod ab ultimis litoribus Hispaniae usque ad Indos iacet? Paucissimorum dierum spatium; Luc. 4.674f. qua lata iacet, uasti plaga feruida regni/distinet oceanum zonaeque exusta calentis; Stat. Theb. 2.503f. semita, quam subter campi deuexaque latis/ arua iacent spatiis; Avien. Orb. Terr. 985 Phrygiae Minori quae iacet inmensae late sub rupibus Idae.

603ff. hinc (602) ... hinc (608) ... hinc (610)

For the threefold repetition of hinc, a rhetorical device favoured especially by Seneca and Silius Italicus, see also Sen. Ep. 88.7, 90.19, 108.30.

604. trahens opulenta Pactolus uada

On account of the gold which its waters carried, the river Pactolus was, in antiquity, a symbol of wealth; see Hor. Epod. 15.20; Tib. 3.3.29; Sen. Oedip. 467; Juv. 14.298f. (Otto, Sprichwörter, Pactolus. 261). For traho used of currents, cf. Verg. Aen. 2.305ff. rapidus ... torrens/ ... sternit sata laeta .../praecipitisque trahit siluas, where, as here, traho suggests the force needed to convey the river's burden.

605. inundat auro rura

Cf. Verg. Aen. 10.141f. ubi pinguia culta/ ... Pactolus inrigat auro.

605f. laetis ./.. aruis

Perhaps Seneca had in mind the territory around Laodiceia in Phrygia, where the rivers Caprus and Lycus joined the Meander, and which is said by Strabo to have grown large because of ἡ τῆς χώρας ἀρετὴ and to have been an excellent sheep producing district (12.578). Laetus of crops or fields is standard; see OLD laetus 1 and TLL 7.883.80ff.

606. flectit errantes aquas

The name of the Macander was in antiquity, as now, proverbial because of its twisting and winding course (see Strabo 12.577 σκολιὸς ὢν εἰς ὑπερβολήν, ὥστε ἐξ ἐκείνου τὰς σκολιότητας ἁπάσας μαιάνδρους καλεῖσθαι; also Paus. 8.41.3; Ov. Met. 8.162ff.; Sen. Herc. Fur. 683f.).

607. Hermus

All the MSS read Hebrus, which was the principal river of Thrace. Gronovius, however, suggested that what Seneca wrote was Hermus, which was a Lydian river. He pointed out that Hebrus is out of place in a catalogue in which all the other areas mentioned are in Asia Minor. One may note, further, that this river is mentioned together with the Maeander; the Maeander and the Hermus both have their source in Phrygia (the Maeander in Celaenae, the Hermus in the Dindymus Mountains) and it is therefore logical to associate them; between the Maeander and the Hebrus, however, there is no connection at all. With regard to the campos fertiles (607), it is significant that Strabo (13.626) includes the plain of the Hermus among those ὅσοι ... πάντων ἄριστοι πεδίων.

608. grata Cereri Gargara

Gargara was the name of the highest peak of the Ida Mountains in southern Troas (Strabo 13.583). The territory around Gargara was renowned for its fertility; see Verg. Georg. 1.103 ipsa suas mirantur Gargara messis.

609. Xanthus ... niuibus Idaeis tumens

As niuibus Idaeis indicates, the Xanthus referred to here is not the Lycian river, but the famous river of Troy, which, according to Homer (Il. 20.74), was called Xanthus by the gods and Scamander by men; Pliny (HN. 5.33), however, mentions the Xanthus and the Scamander as two separate rivers. Strabo (13.602) states that the Xanthus had its source in Mount Ida.

610ff. hinc qua relinquit nomen Ionii mare ...

All the MSS read maris in 610, which is problematic because it leaves the clauses which follow, aut qua latus ... dedit/ tutamque ... uidet (612f.), without a subject (see Heinsius, Aduers., 58f.; Courtney, RFIC 113 (1985), 298). Bentley's emendation, mare, provides all three clauses with a satisfactory subject (nomen would thus be the object of relinquit - 'where the sea gives up the name of Ionian'), and, as Zwierlein observes (Krit. Komm., 127f.), the assimilation of mare to the genitive Ionii could easily have occurred. Ionii troubled Wilamowitz, who conjectured Inois mari, unnecessarily, since the loose sense of mare Ionium, meaning the sea around the coast of Ionia (rather than the Ionian Sea proper), is attested elsewhere, notably in Ov. Fast. 4.565ff. (see also Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 506). The reference in hinc qua ... is, of course, to the Hellespont, as the following verse makes clear, Abydos being on the coast of Asia Minor, with Sestos opposite it, across the straits on the Thracian coast (see Ov. Trist. 1.10.27f. quodque per angustas uectae male uirginis undas/Seston Abydena separat urbe fretum).

Hirschberg ad loc. observes that the expression relinquere nomen occurs also in Hor. Od. 3.27.34f. and Cic. Parad. 22.

610-14. hinc qua relinquit/.../haec terra ferro quaere

Courtney (RFIC 113 (1985), 298) objects to the fact that hinc qua (610) and qua (612) are joined by aut rather than et, as in 602ff., and that the area designated in 610f. shows none of the attractions of the places listed earlier. Both these objections fall away if one understands what Seneca means in these lines: the 'Ionian' sea flows around the coast of Asia Minor, and by naming its most northerly point, the Hellespont, and it most southerly, the Lycian shore, Seneca

demarcates not just the Hellespont or Lycia, but the whole area between them as suitable for conquest for Polyneices (see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 127). In the preceding lines (602-8), Lydia (Tmolus and Pactolus), Phrygia (Maeander and Hermus), Caria (Maeander), Mysia (Gargara and Xanthus) are separately evoked; here, at the climax of his catalogue, Seneca embraces them collectively by referring to the whole coastline washed by the 'Ionian' sea.

611. **faucesque Abydo Sestos opposita premit**

Fauces is regularly used of narrow straits (TLL 6.398.70ff.; see esp. Verg. Georg. 1.206f. quibus .../ Pontus et ostriferi fauces temptantur Abydi); for fauces premere, cf. Sen. Thyest. 628f. maris gemini premens/ fauces Corinthos and see Tarrant's note ad loc.

612. **latus ... propius orienti dedit**

The subject is still mare (see on 610). Latus is not uncommonly used in poetry for litus (see TLL 7.1029.2ff.; Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 128; for MS confusion between litus and latus, see Sen. Thyest. 114); latus dedit = 'it has presented a shore [nearer to the east]' (iam suggests that dedit should be construed as a true perfect). For the present/perfect tense variation, cf. 13ff., where ostentat (21) stands out as the only present (with perfect sense) in a series of perfects, and 388 where, as here, stetit is a single true perfect in a sequence of present verbs. Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 514 notes tense variation also at Sen. Troad. 676, Med. 136, Phaedr. 979, Oedip. 726ff.

propius

Gronovius' emendation of propior of the MSS must be correct, since, as he observes, there is nothing with which propior can agree. The substitution of -or for -us would have been a simple error in view of the following or- of Orienti.

613. **tutamque crebris portibus Lyciam**

Strabo (14.664) describes the coast of Lydia as being εὐλίμενος σφόδρα.

614. **hac**

The MSS all have haec, which is awkward, following hinc and qua in the preceding lines: Jocasta has been suggesting directions in which Polyneices may look for a kingdom, rather than specific places, which haec regna implies. Gronovius suggested hic (of which Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 128) observes that hinc, which is sometimes found with the sense of hic, would be better, in view of the occurrence of hinc in the preceding lines), Bothe proposed hac. Hac appeals for the reasons which Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 128f.) states: it corresponds with the double qua in 610 and 612 (which is nearer than the repetition of hinc) and it is the same type of error as is found also in Phaedr. 334 and Thyest. 1084, where, in each case, hac follows a double qua. Furthermore, it is easy to see how hac could have been corrupted to haec because of the juxtaposition of the neuter plural regna; the corruption of hic to haec would have been less easy.

615. fortis

Is Jocasta to be regarded as indulging in deliberate irony by calling Adrastus fortis here, since in 510 she described him as hostis? Probably not; it seems more likely that Seneca intends us to perceive what is, on Jocasta's part, a piece of unconscious irony. It would be quite characteristic of this highly protective and emotional woman to change her attitude to a person dramatically once she saw him in a different - and non-threatening - role. Seneca is here revealing a keen psychological sensitivity.

has tuo sceptro paret

Most editors adopt the word order of E, has tuo sceptro paret (A has has paret sceptro tuo), possibly for the sake of the not particularly striking chiasmus which results from the juxtaposition of paret and tradatque (616), but, more probably, because E is generally more reliable than A on word order: exluding this instance, of the eight cases where E and A differ on word order in Phoen. (viz. 18, 171, 230 (allowing for the corruption of es to est in E), 279, 331, 570, 573, 636), A is correct only once (636).

616f. hoc adhuc regnum puta/tenere patrem

Hoc is awkward and confusing because of the sudden change of reference of the demonstrative: hac (614), hos (614) and has (615) apply to Asia Minor, but hoc (616) must be taken to refer to Thebes, although logically the sentence should mean: 'Imagine that Oedipus is still ruling in Asia Minor.' Moreover, Jocasta's exhortation to self-delusion is curious and rather lame, particularly in the light of 617f., since Polyneices would not be an exile if his father were still

on the throne. Since 617b (Melius exilium est tibi) could follow 616a (tradatque gentes) without metrical difficulty, one should consider deleting hoc ... patrem as an interpolation, introduced to ease the transition from the subject of Polyneices' future kingdom to that of his present exile, and possibly to create a connection with the first section (1-362) of the play by referring to Oedipus.

617f. **melius exilium est tibi/quam reditus iste**

Cf. 494 patiare potius ipse quam facias scelus. Iste = a return which involves a crime of great magnitude.

618. **alieno**

I.e. of Eteocles. Alienus, as well as meaning simply 'of another', can also have the sense (like English 'alien') of 'unnatural' or 'inappropriate' (OLD alienus 2, 8) and Seneca may have intended his audience to recognize the dual implications of the word.

619. **istis uiribus**

I.e. with your father-in-law's military support. Iste here simply indicates 'that which you have with you', but cf. iste in 618, which has a decidedly pejorative overtone.

620. **nullo scelere maculata**

I.e. neither by the crime which Polyneices would commit if he were to return to Thebes through violence, nor by the crimes by which Thebes has been polluted in the past - the murder of Laius and the incest of

Oedipus and Jocasta.

621f. **quin ipse frater .../tibi militabit**

Fantham ('Incest and Fratricide', 75 n.23) suggests that Seneca is here thinking of Agamemnon's co-operation with Menelaus in the Trojan War. This may be so, but Seneca is making Jocasta speak with unconscious irony since the notion of Eteocles and Polyneices fighting side by side in harmony is implausible, to say the least. Seneca here and in the lines which follow (622-24) is painting a picture of the sort of support and encouragement that Polyneices might expect from a normal family, thereby reminding his audience how far removed from life in the real world Oedipus, Jocasta and their children are.

623f. **in quo pater materque pugnanti tibi/fauere possint**

Jocasta speaks as though she and Oedipus are ordinary parents, sharing the same hopes and fears for their son, an irony which must have been as obvious to Seneca's audience as it is to us, in view of Oedipus' outburst against the young men in 334ff. in which he expresses the hope that they <u>will</u> destroy Thebes. Logically, Jocasta must know what Oedipus' real feelings are since Antigone would have told her, but she appears to ignore them. Must this be explained away in terms of Seneca's lack of concern with realism, or can it be otherwise accounted for? That Seneca was capable of acute psychological insight is undoubted. Perhaps he intended Jocasta's strikingly unconvincing picture of parents and sons happily united in common cause to convey Jocasta's longing for a normal family life, with her attempt to imagine her sons and husband behaving like other people's sons and husbands reflecting her desire for them to do so. See also on 506f.

624f. **regna cum scelere omnibus/sunt exiliis grauiora**

Cf. 598 in seruitutem cadere de regno graue est. Jocasta's sententia is a response to that of Polyneices with the key-word, grauiora, being given prominence by being reserved to the last word in the sentence.

624. **cum scelere**

Sc. accepta (uel sim.). Cum here has a strong instrumental force; for further examples of cum used in this way, see TLL 4.1369.40ff.

625ff. **nunc belli mala/.../Fors caeca uersat**

At this point Jocasta changes the direction of her argument. Thus far she has urged Polyneices to wage war as long as it is not against Thebes, but now she points out the risks involved in war in general.

626. **propone**

Propono = 'imagine', 'picture to oneself' is more usually found with sibi, animo, ante oculos, uel sim. (OLD propono 5b), but see Sen. Suas. 1.4 immanes propone beluas, where, as here, propono is used absolutely. Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 222 observes that propone has a declamatory ring.

dubias Martis incerti uices

The uncertain fortunes of war are proverbial; cf. Ov. Am. 1.9.29; Liv. 1.33.4; Luc. 4.770; Tac. Hist. 4.35.2; Otto, Sprichwörter, Fortuna 6 cites also Caes. BG. 6.30, BC. 3.38.

627ff. licet ... /licet ... /ancipiti in loco est

Cf. Sen. Suas. 2.1 for a similar construction: Loco tuti sumus. Licet totum classe Orientem trahat, licet intuentibus explicet inutilem numerum.

627. licet omne tecum Graeciae robur trahas

Cf. 325 in bella cunctos Graeciae populos agit and see note ad loc. Robur is metonomy for milites robusti; it is not used in this way elsewhere by Seneca, but see, e.g., Liv. 10.14.9 ex omnium Samnitium populis quodcumque roboris fuerat contraxerant; Luc. 3.516f. Graia iuuentus/ omne suum fatis uoluit committere robur (OLD robur 6b).

628. miles

On the collective singular, see on 574.

629. fortuna belli ... in loco est

Reminiscent of Dido's words in Verg. Aen. 4.603 uerum anceps pugnae fuerat fortuna.

630. quodcumque Mars decernit

It seems better to punctuate with a full-stop after est (629) and to take this clause together with what follows, rather than as the tail-end of the sententia fortuna ... loco est (so Leo), thus weakening its impact. Quodcumque thus = 'everything' rather than 'according to whatever' (as in 362).

630f. **exaequat duos/... gladius**

There are no parallels for the hiatus in the fourth foot demanded by gladio, the reading of E.

For the metonomy, gladius = bellum, see also Sen. Troad. 284.

licet impares sint

The implication is that Polyneices' forces are more powerful than those of Eteocles, which is plausible if he has with him omne ... Graeciae robur (627).

632. **Fors**

There is MS consensus on sors, which Ascensius corrected to Fors. Confusion in the MSS between fors and sors is not uncommon and the corruption of fors to sors occurs more frequently than vice versa. In support of Fors can be cited Verg. Ecl. 9.5, where the expression fors ... uersat occurs. The epithet caeca, moreover, also favours the reading Fors, since it is proverbially applied to Fortuna (Otto, Sprichwörter, Fortuna 1, with which Fors is frequently linked for emphasis (see TLL 6.1129.45ff.).

632f. **praemium incertum petis,/certum scelus**

For paronomasia of this kind in Senecan drama, cf. Herc. Fur. 364 sed arma felix teneat, infelix paret; Oedip. 841f. nec notus satis,/ nec rursus iste uultus ignotus mihi.

633f. **fauisse fac uotis deos/omnes tuis**

The word order gives emphasis to fauisse and tuis: Jocasta has been at pains to stress the uncertainty of the fortunes of war and thus the possibility of Polyneices' defeat; now, by contrast, she creates a scenario in which Polyneices' wishes are actually granted.

635. **ciues**

See on 589. Hirschberg ad loc. observes that ciues contrasts with miles in 636.

636. **obtexit agros miles**

The order of E, miles agros, cannot be correct, as it results in a spondee in the second as well as the fourth foot.

On the image, see Hirschberg ad loc. who observes that the size of a fleet is often stressed by being described as covering or hiding the sea. On the collective singular, miles, see on 574.

637. **uictorque fratris spolia deiecti geras**

Here Jocasta does not specify what spoils Polyneices will carry off, but one is reminded of 571ff., where the spolia are enumerated, and, in particular, of 578, the climax of the catalogue, mater triumphi praeda fraterni uehar. Hirschberg ad loc. observes that spolia gero is prosaic and compares Liv. 42.61.9 spolia caesorum hostium umeris gerentes.

638. **frangenda palma est**

Plangenda (Iac. Gronovius) and lugenda (Bentley) have been offered as

alternatives to the MS reading, frangenda. There seems, however, to be no good reason to emend frangenda: firstly, the metaphor is a striking one, which occurs also in Curt. 9.2.29 Ne infregeritis in manibus meis palmam, albeit in a rather different sense (Alexander envisages the victor's palm as being already in his hands and he implores his soldiers not to deprive him of it by refusing to fight further); secondly, neither plangenda nor lugenda conveys the same sense as frangenda - that Polyneices' victory, because of the nature of the contest, would actually be tainted.

tu hoc bellum

A reads id bellum, but Zwierlein (Krit. Komm.. 129) points out that corruption could have resulted through the influence of 491 and 622f., where the formula id bellum, in quo occurs. He observes that nowhere else in the corpus of Senecan drama does id stand in elision, and he draws attention to [Sen.] Herc. Oet. 448, where, as here, A reads id for hoc, where likewise hoc is probably correct (being more emphatic where emphasis is desirable).

639. **execrandum uictor admittit nefas**

For execrandum used with nefas, see also Sen. Troad. 44 uidi execrandum regiae caedis nefas, where the nefas referred to is the murder of Priam even as he clung to the altar as a suppliant: the adjective thus conveys the notion of a crime of unmeasureable heinousness. Billerbeck (Senecas Tragödien, 81 para. 179 observes that execrandus in its adjectival form is not attested before Seneca and that it is rare even in prose before late Latin.

The word order, with execrandum separated from nefas but juxtaposed

with uictor, has the effect of linking the adjective not only with nefas, to which it belongs syntactically, but also, by proximity, with uictor.

640. **gaudet**

Sc. quod uictoriam reportauit.

infelix

Here = 'misguided'; it is not used thus elsewhere in the dramas, but cf. Sen. Ep. 89.22 Infelices, ecquid intellegitis ...? and 94.62 Agebat infelicem Alexandrum furor (for examples of infelix used thus by other authors, see TLL 7.1364.24ff.). The juxtaposition of infelix with uincere highlights the anomalous situation: usually a triumphant general would be described as felix (see Sen. Herc. Fur. 364f. sed arma felix teneat, infelix paret,/ nihil relinquent bella), but in this instance, Polyneices is said to be infelix even to wish for victory.

641. **cum uiceris**

= 'when you have conquered him'. This should not be taken as a prophetic statement that victory will be Polyneices' in the coming battle; rather, it is simply a manner of speaking, 'when' being more definite and thus rhetorically more effective than 'if'.

641f. **age dimitte**

For age followed by another imperative, see also Sen. Troad. 509f.,

963f.. 1000f. In all these instances age is the last word in the verse and the second imperative stands first in the following verse; thus the second imperative is given considerable weight, not only as a result of the intensifying force of age (see Servius' comment below) but also because of its position in the line. Servius on Verg. Aen. 2.707 explained the formula as follows: 'age' ... non est modo uerbum imperantis, sed hortantis aduerbium, adeo, ut plerumque 'age facite' dicamus et singularem numerum copulemus plurali.

infaustas pugnas

The traditional curse of Oedipus on his sons is transformed in Phoen. into an exhortation (see on 355) and there is no direct reference to the general curse on the house. Infaustus, however, has a range of meaning which includes 'accursed' (see on 3). As Hirschberg observes ad loc., the position of infaustas, before the imperative and separated from pugnas, is very emphatic.

642f. **libera patriam metu,/luctu parentes**

The chiasmus gives emphasis to Jocasta's final plea by juxtaposing the alliterative metu ... luctu, which is enclosed by another alliterative pair patriam ... parentes. For the expression libera metu, see also Sen. Troad. 551 libera Graios metu, Med. 271 libera ciues metu. Cf. also the well-known words of Cicero to Catiline (Cat. 1.20): egredere ex urbe, Catilina; libera rem publicam metu; ..., with which, as Walter observes (Interpretationen zum Römischen, 66-8), Seneca shows his familiarity in Med.

643. **luctu parentes**

See on 623f. Again, the irony is striking, since luctus in no way describes the emotion expressed by Oedipus at his sons' behaviour.

643f. **sceleris et fraudis suae/... ferat**

Polyneices is reconsidering his conditional capitulation in 591: Jocasta has suggested possible areas in which he might seek a kingdom, thus responding to his proviso da quo reuertar (592), but he is still not willing to abandon his claim to the throne of Thebes and to allow Eteocles to get away with his treachery. Seneca, of course, cannot permit him to yield, because of the constraint of the traditional form of the legend (on the effectiveness of the apparent yielding of Polyneices, see on 591f.).

644. **ut ... ferat**

A result, not a purpose, clause (pace Miller: 'That my cursed brother may receive no penalty for his crime and treachery').

645. **ne metue**

Cf. 495 (and see note ad loc.) and 555. For ne metue, see also Sen. Phaedr. 993, 1240; Agam. 796; Thyest. 980.

645f. **poenas et quidem soluet graues:/regnabit**

The undesirability of kingship is a recurrent theme in Senecan drama; see Oedip. 6ff., 674f.; Agam. 57ff.; Thyest. 424f. Here, however kingship is not presented as being undesirable per se; it is

specifically the holder of the Theban throne who is not to be envied, in view of the unhappy history of Theban kings (for the thought, cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 386ff. and see Fitch ad loc.)

The turn of phrase is characteristically Senecan; cf. Herc. Fur. 1316f. eat ad labores hic quoque Herculeos labor:/uiuamus, Med. 19f. Num peius aliquid? quod precer sponso malum?/ uiuat (also Phoen. 319, Med. 26).

est haec poena

This is the reading of the MSS with the exception of ψ , a late MS of the A family (see Tarrant, Sen. Agam., 86) which has haec est poena. Scriverius, followed by Gronovius and Bothe, emended to haecne est poena and assigned the question to Polyneices, si dubitas ... being Jocasta's reply. Admittedly, the MSS frequently fail to designate the speaker, especially here in the last few lines of the play, but it is unnecessary to assume a change of speaker at this point. Jocasta's insistence in est haec poena, which would have been emphatically spoken by the actor, is quite understandable in view of the fact that kingship is not generally regarded as a poena and especially not by Polyneices. Heinsius (Aduers., 59) suggested that what Jocasta said was est hoc poena?, with hoc = regnare. This is simply another way of expressing insistence about the same thing, and as est haec poena does this quite adequately, there seems to be little reason to emend the text and exchange a statement for a question.

646f. si dubitas, auo/patrique crede

This sort of argument is used elsewhere by Seneca in self-address; see Agam. 51f. quid ipse temet consulis torques rogas,/ an deceat hoc te?

respice ad patrem: decet; Thyest. 241ff. quid stupes? tandem incipe/ animosque sume: Tantalum et Pelopem aspice;/ ad haec manus exempla poscuntur meae (cf. Ov. Met. 6.634 cui sis nupta, uide, Pandione nata).

647. **Cadmus hoc dicet tibi**

Cadmus suffered the unhappy fate of being turned into a serpent, because, according to Hyginus (Fab. 6; see also Ov. Met. 4.563ff.), Ares wished to punish him for killing his sacred dragon, which guarded the spring at Thebes. This occurred after he had left Thebes and gone to Illyria (see Apollod. 3.5.4; Paus. 9.5.3), not voluntarily, according to Diodorus (19.53.5), but because he and his followers were driven from the city after it had been sacked by the Encheleans (cf. Ov. Met. 4.564f. which says that Cadmus left Thebes luctu serieque malorum/ uictus et ostentis, quae plurima uiderat).

Cadmique proles

After Cadmus left Thebes for Illyria, the throne is said by one tradition to have passed immediately to his son, Polydorus (Paus. 9.5.3; E. Ph. 8) of whose end nothing is known. This tradition represents Pentheus as ἴσχυε μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς κατὰ γένους ἀξίωμα καὶ φιλίᾳ τοῦ βασιλέως (Paus. 9.5.4). The other tradition makes Pentheus the heir to Cadmus' throne (Apollod. 3.5.2; E. Ba. 44f.) and Polydorus his successor (Apollod. 3.5.5). Pentheus' fate is referred to several times in Sen. Phoen. (see also 15ff., 364f.). Cf. Sen. Herc. Fur. 268 and Oedip. 110 where Cadmi (Cadmea in Herc. Fur.) proles refers to contemporary descendants of Cadmus, viz. Hercules and the Theban people respectively, which cannot be the case

here.

648. Thebano

This is the reading of most of the MSS (K and Q have Thebana, which is metrically impossible). Ascensius emended to Thebarum, an emendation accepted by Zwierlein, who argues that illa in 650 demands that sceptra be given 'einem präzisierenden Attribut' since Seneca is not making a general statement about the failure to retain power of those who have broken faith (Krit. Komm., 129). This seems like pedantry: in a context in which the burning issue is the broken agreement of two Thebans concerning the kingship of Thebes, and Jocasta is speaking about the unhappy history of that kingship, the most natural way to take nec ... illa would surely be as referring specifically to the Theban throne.

648f. fuit/... nulli gerere

The formula est + infinitive (= 'it is possible') is a Graecism (ἔστιν ἰδεῖν). Found first in Mumm. Atell. 1, Lucr. 2.16, Gell. 18.12.9, it was adopted by the Augustan poets and later by Silver Latin poets; it was never popular with prose writers. See Bömer on Ov. Met. 3.478, Koestermann on Tac. Ann. 16.34.1, L-H-S 2.349.

649f. nec quisquam fide/rupta tenebat illa

Most modern editors have read tenebit with E, but Zwierlein (Krit. Komm., 129f.), following Gronovius, prefers tenebat (A), on the grounds that iam numeres licet/ fratrem inter istos (650f.) shows that Jocasta, in the preceding lines of her speech, was not including

Eteocles in the number of unlucky kings of Thebes: hence, the future, tenebit, is out of place. He argues, moreover, that the effect of tenebit is weak, because it generalizes, linking breach of faith to loss of kingship in every case, ignoring the specific instance of the curse on the house of Thebes; tenebat, on the other hand, produces 'eine Steigerung' in that nec ... tenebat illa implies that the curse on the kings of Thebes is all the more certain to overtake Eteocles, since none of his predecessors could avoid it and they did not, like him, commit the crime of breaking an oath (he compares Sen. Herc. Fur. 488f. eris inter istos - qui tamen nullo stupro/ laesere thalamos.). It seems to me that Zwierlein makes too much of 'der Fluch', since the notion of a general curse on the house of Thebes (stemming from Laius' disobedience to Apollo in begetting a child) is nowhere directly referred to in Phoen. (see on 3 infaustum); that apart, however, his arguments are compelling. One might add, moreover, that if one were to read tenebit, istos (651) loses much of its impact, because it refers not to the definite past but to the hypothetical future.

650. iam

Iam here is more causal than temporal: 'now' virtually = 'because of what he has done' (see TLL 7.128.77ff. for further examples of iam used to introduce a conclusion).

651ff. This is the only passage of stichomythia, or rather, of partial stichomythia (not all the exchanges consist of single lines) in the play. Although brief, it reveals two of the most striking characteristics of Senecan stichomythic dialogue, viz. the network of verbal echoes by which the dialogue proceeds (numeres 650 and numeret

651, regna 653 and regnare 654, inuisus 653 and inuisus 654, imperia 660 and imperi 661), and the gnomic nature of the statements which set forth uncompromisingly two opposing intellectual attitudes (see especially 654, 659, 660, 664) (for these features in the stichomythic exchanges in other Senecan plays, see Herc. Fur. 422-38, 446-55; Troad. 327-36; Med. 159-73; Oedip. 511-29, 699-706; Agam. 145-54; Thyest. 204-20).

The subject of the dialogue, how a king can rule most effectively, is a recurring one in Senecan drama; cf. Med. 195-96, 439 ; Oedip. 699ff.; Thyest. 204ff.; Troad. 259f.

651-53. fratrem inter istos. ET. Numeret, est tanti mihi/.../ ascribo

All the MSS read ... istos. POL. numero et est tanti mihi ... iacere, with A giving te turbae exulum/ascribo (652f.) to Jocasta. Polyneices' words must in this case mean: 'I do count him [as one of the doomed kings] and [being doomed] is worth it for me if I can lie with kings.' Thus Polyneices is rejecting outright Jocasta's final attempt to make him renounce the Theban throne and the rest of the dialogue (653-64) takes place between him and Jocasta. A's allocation of te turbae exulum/ascribo to Jocasta clearly makes no sense; for it to do so, either te should be emended to me (not a problem, since the text is confused at this point anyway, with E reading et urbi), or the words must be given to Polyneices. Either way, there are difficulties when one considers these verses and those that follow in the light of the treatment of the legend as a whole. If one accepts the MSS' presentation of 651-64 as an exchange between Polyneices and Jocasta one must believe that Seneca transferred to Polyneices the ruthless greed which in the Euripidean play characterises Eteocles; a theory which does not fit well with Polyneices' conditional yielding, albeit

temporary, in 591f. or with the sympathy with Polyneices' plight which has been generated through Jocasta's descripton of the trials of his exile (502ff.) and by his own account of his humuliating position vis-à-vis his wealthy wife (586ff.). Furthermore, the notion of Jocasta's retiring into exile, whether enforced or voluntary, is problematic in terms of the traditional form of the legend in which she kills herself at the mutual murder of her sons. Thus Heinsius' emendation (Aduers., 59), which reads POL: Numero me et est tanti mihi ... exulum adscribe is not very helpful. It seems that one should consider the conjectures of Birt (Rh. Mus. 34 (1879), 523) and Schmidt (De Emen. Sen. Trag., 20), both of whom introduce Eteocles at this point. Birt's suggestion was: POL. Numero. ET. Me est tanti mihi ... ascribo, whereas Schmidt proposed ET. Numeret, est tanti mihi/cum regibus iacere. The latter is without doubt rhetorically more effective, since for Polyneices to echo Jocasta's words is simply to slow down the pace of the dialogue without adding anything worthwhile to it, whereas Eteocles' defiant flinging back at Jocasta of her numeres (651a) is swift and forceful. The dialogue, which ensues takes place between Jocasta and Eteocles (which makes sense in terms of Jocasta's words at 459ff., where it is implied that she will turn her attention to Eteocles after she has spoken to Polyneices, see also on 663 coniugem) and Polyneices does not speak again in the remaining portion of the text, the words te ... ascribo (652b-653) being spoken by Eteocles and addressed to Polyneices (see below). Eteocles must be imagined as having been silently present throughout the discussion between Jocasta and Polyneices; on the awkwardness of this in terms of staging, see Intro., 68f. Another difficulty which arises from seeing 651b-64 as a dialogue between Eteocles and Jocasta is the sudden silence of Polyneices, especially since his rejection of Jocasta's plea that he abandon his attempt to recover the Theban throne has

never been made explicit and Jocasta appears to have had the last word with Ne metue poenas et quidem soluet graues .... (545-51). The doubt concerning Polyneices' position may, however, have been a deliberate touch introduced by Seneca as a red herring of uncertainty in a story whose conclusion, in terms of the tradition, was entirely predictable.

652f. te turbae exulum/ascribo

Jocasta has referred several times to Polyneices as an exile (372, 466, 502, 513, 625) and Polyneices has called himself profugus (586); thus, on the surface, Axelson's assumption that Eteocles has already formally exiled Polyneices (see Zwierlein, Krit. Komm. 130) seems not unreasonable. If this is so, te ... ascribo must be addressed to Jocasta (so Hirschberg, Sen. Phoen., 17), a Senecan embellishment to the traditional form of the legend, which accords well with his tendency to paint his villains in the blackest colours possible. It should be noted, though, that in E. Ph. at the equivalent point in the plot, Eteocles formally and unambiguously exiles Polyneices (603), who has, however, already previously been referred to as an exile (76, 319, 369, 378, 388ff.). It is thus clear that the term 'exile' is, in that case, used loosely of voluntary exile as well as of formal banishment. Thus, the previous application to Polyneices in Sen. Phoen. of terms such as exul and profugus need prove nothing about his official status (see on 592f. fin.), and there is no reason to assume that it is Jocasta who is being addressed with te .. ascribo. In view of the lack of dialogue between Eteocles and Polyneices (on the significance of this, see Intro., 69) that this should be the only direct communication between them is particularly telling. An actor would, of course, by gesture and intonation, have no difficulty in making it clear that it is Polyneices to whom these words apply.

653. **Regna, dummodo inuisus tuis**

If Eteocles is the speaker from 651b to 653a, as seems likely, Regna ... tuis should be attributed with the MSS to Jocasta, rather than, following Grotius, to Polyneices, since, apart from considerations of the flow of the dialogue, for Polyneices to abandon his claim to the throne and retire from the conflict would be an impossibly bold departure from the accepted ending of the legend (see further Intro., 21ff.

654ff. As with 651b-53a, E allocates these lines to Polyneices (A does likewise), and, with consistency, gives 661f. and 664 to Polyneices in addition (A does not indicate the speaker in either place). Grotius reassigned the lines, giving them all to Eteocles, which must be correct if Eteocles is the speaker in 651b-53a (see above).

654. **Regnare non uult, esse qui inuisus timet**

The hyperbaton is the result of metrical exigencies: neither qui esse inuisus nor qui inuisus esse can be accommodated.

For the thought, cf. Sen. Oedip. 703f. Odia qui nimium timet/ regnare nescit: regna custodit metus.

654-58. Regnare non uult/.../ plus in iratos licet

For the paradox that a king's power is increased by his people's hatred, cf. Sen. Thyest. 211f. where Atreus rejoices in insincere praise since he sees it as a measure of his power, there being no reason to flatter those without power.

On the absence of clementia in Senecan tyrants, both those in the prose works and those in the dramas, see Walter, Interpretationen zum

Römischen, 122f.

655. **simul ista mundi conditor deus**

The inevitability, in Eteocles' view, of the association of royal power with hatred is expressed in his assertion that Jupiter himself established it thus. The effect of Eteocles' statement is to reinforce our perception of him as a deeply corrupt individual, not because what he says is palpably false, but because we suspect that, in his fanatical lust for power, he has convinced himself that it is true. With this declaration, Eteocles enters the twisted, dark world of Lycus (Herc. Fur.) and Atreus (Thyest.).

Mundi conditor as an appellation of Jupiter, first found in Manil. 2.701 and elsewhere only in Sen. Ep. 119.15, was adopted by Christian authors and commonly used with reference to God (TLL 4.146.83ff.). As applied to Jupiter, the phrase has different connotations when used by Manilius and by Seneca: Manilius speaks of the conditor mundi in connection with his ordering of the stars; he would thus appear to be thinking of Jupiter in his primary function, as discerned by the Greeks, as the god of the sky (mundus) (on this, see Guthrie, The Greeks and their Gods, 37ff.). Seneca, both here and in Ep. 119 (where the phrase is embellished by the clause qui nobis uiuendi iura discripsit) has in mind the extended role played by Jupiter as the 'father of gods and men', a role which is first attributed to Zeus by Homer in the Iliad (see, e.g. Il. 1.544, 15.47; on the development of this role, see Kerényi, Hera and Zeus, 46f.) and which found its way into Roman thinking via epic (see Enn. Ann. 592 (ed. Skutsch) patrem diuomque hominumque; Verg. Aen. 1.254 hominum sator atque deorum).

regis hoc magni reor

In support of hoc (E) over et (A), Zwierlein cites Sen. Oedip. 82f. regium hoc ipsum reor:/ aduersa capere and, less tellingly, Med. 222f. hoc reges habent /magnificum et ingens (Krit. Komm., 130).

657. odia ipsa premere

Ipsa of E gives superior sense to A's ista: ista is merely deictic (= 'that hatred of which I have just been speaking'); ipsa gives emphasis not only to odis but to the whole phrase (= 'actually to suppress hatred'). For ipse used in this way, to emphasize an extreme idea, see also Cic. Fin. 3.11 eas non modo nihil adiuuare arbitror ..., sed ipsam deprauare naturam; Ov. Her. 12.61 hinc amor, hinc timor est; ipsum timor auget amorem. The suppression of hatred by fear is said by Seneca in Clem. 1.12.3 to be the mark of a tyrant. Hirschberg ad loc. observes that the expression odia premere occurs later in Plin. Pan. 62.5.

Axelson's conjecture of petere for premere (see Zwierlein Krit. Komm., 130), influenced by the MS differences in Sen. Oedip. 710, is appealing in that it results in an even more extreme thought, but in view of the fact that premere, on which there is MS consensus, gives good sense (see Zwierlein, ibid., for parallels; also OLD premo 20b), there seems to be little justification for emending the text.

The unspoken corollary of odia ipsa premere is nec odia timere, the fear that is provoked by fear being proverbial (see Sen. Oedip. 705f. Qui sceptra duro saeuus imperio gerit,/ timet timentis and Tarrant on Sen. Agam. 72f.).

657f. multa dominantem uetat/amor suorum

Suorum is subjective: Eteocles is speaking of the people's feelings for him - hatred or love - not vice versa. The implication is that if his subjects love him, the ruler's power depends on their favour, which, being restrictive, would not be to Eteocles' liking.
For a different expression of a similar idea, cf. Sen. Thyest. 214f. Ubicumque tantum honesta dominanti licent,/ precario regnatur. It is significant that both Atreus and Eteocles use the term dominans with its suggestion of tyranny, rather than rex. See Sen. Clem. 1.11.4, where he explains the difference between tyrants and kings as follows: tyranni in uoluptatem saeuiunt, reges non nisi ex causa ac necessitate; he observes that a king survives to hand over his throne to his descendants, whereas the rule of a tyrant is exsecrabilis ac breuis (cf. Phoen. 660). See further Intro.,62 n.1.

658. plus in iratos licet

He can exercise his power more freely over these, because he does not depend upon their goodwill.

659. qui uult amari, languida regnat manu

Cf. the famous words of Accius, quoted by Seneca in Clem. 1.20.4 oderint dum metuant. Cf. also Clem. 1.3.3 Illius demum magnitudo stabilis fundataque est, quem omnes tam supra se esse quam pro se sciunt. Eteocles appears, in fact, as the embodiment of the kind of ruler that Seneca condemns to Nero in Clem. For love as the guarantor of a king's safety, see Isoc. Ad Nic. 21; Cic. Marcell. 21.

660. Inuisa numquam imperia retinentur diu

A recurring thought in Senecan drama; cf. Troad. 258f. uiolenta nemo imperia continuit diu,/ moderata durant; Med. 196 Iniqua numquam regna perpetuo manent; Thyest. 215ff. Ubi non est pudor/ nec cura iuris sanctitas pietas fides,/instabile regnum est. Also noteworthy is Herc. Fur. 341ff. which refers, not to kingship in general, but to the insecurity of a ruler who holds by force a throne usurped (see Fitch ad loc.)

661. Praecepta melius imperi reges dabunt

The uncompromisingly direct statement by Jocasta in 661 admits of no response by Eteocles (cf. Thyest. 215ff., where the slightly more guarded expression - befitting a servant as opposed to a mother - of the same idea, allows Atreus to snap out a retort). He sidesteps and haughtily, but rather weakly, tells Jocasta to mind her own business and organize Polyneices' exile.

662. exilia tu compone

E reads oppone, A dispone. Axelson conjectured compone on the grounds that dis- could not have been corrupted to opp-, but that comp- could have been (Zwierlein, Krit. Komm., 130). Dis- in A, by this argument, has to be an attempt to correct the opp- which must have its origin in the archetype.

The exile referred to is that of Polyneices (see on 652f.): Eteocles is, in effect, dismissing Jocasta from his life along with Polyneices.

663. Patriam penates coniugem, flammis dare

This swift interjection by Jocasta conveys her desperation and frustration. She uses the argument, here expressed more tersely and starkly because of the heightened tension, which she used on Polyneices in 555ff. and 571ff. Polyneices at least wavered, showing that some spark of pietas survived in him, but Eteocles' response is unhesitating rejection of his homeland and family.

coniugem

In none of the other extant treatments of the Oedipus legend is there any mention of Eteocles' wife. There are, however, various references in Greek prose authors to Eteocles' son, Laodamas (Ion of Chios cited in Sallustius' hypothesis to S. Ant.; Hdt. 5.61; Paus. 9.5.13), which implies that he was married. We know, of course, that Polyneices had a wife, but the fact that she would not be directly endangered by the war, being in Argos, supports the view that it is Eteocles who is being addressed here (see on 651-53).

664. Imperia pretio quolibet constant bene

See E. Ph. 504ff. ἄστρων ἂν ἔλθοιμ' ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς/ καὶ γῆς ἔνερθεν . . . ,/ τὴν θεῶν μεγίστην ὥστ' ἔχειν Τυραννίδα and 524f. εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι/ κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, and cf. Sen. Clem. 1.26.5 multos quidem occidere et indiscretos incendii ac ruinae potentia est. Hirschberg ad loc. observes that an act is concluded with a sententia in Phaedr. 735 also, but suggests that Seneca would not have ended the whole play (i.e. Phoen.) thus, since no other Senecan drama concludes with a sententia.

Appendix I

A detailed distribution of family terms* in Seneca's plays:

	Total	H.F.	Tr.	Ph.	Med.	Phae.	Oed.	Ag.	Thy.	[H.O.]
nata	24	0	5	6	3	0	1	5	0	4
natus	180	23	19	14	18	16	16	9	22	43
parens	119	17	14	18	3	15	18	9	8	17
genitor	67	13	3	10	5	12	5	1	7	11
mater	161	9	26	31	14	14	17	7	2	41
pater	177	25	18	25	17	11	11	20	18	32
paternus	31	1	5	6	4	3	3	4	3	2
frater	106	9	2	25	13	5	5	7	37	3
fraternus	10	1	0	2	2	1	0	2	2	0
maternus	18	0	5	4	0	1	2	3	0	3
filia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
coniunx	114	18	12	3	16	10	6	15	3	31
uxor	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
soror	36	7	2	3	2	5	4	8	1	4
Total	1047	123	111	147	98	93	88	92	104	191
No. of lines in play		1344	1179	664	1027	1280	1061	1012	1112	1996
Average distribution of family terms: one per x no. of lines		10.9	10.6	**4.5**	10.5	13.8	12.1	11	10.7	10.5

*Figures based on Denooz, Lucius Annaeus Seneca Index Verborum.

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